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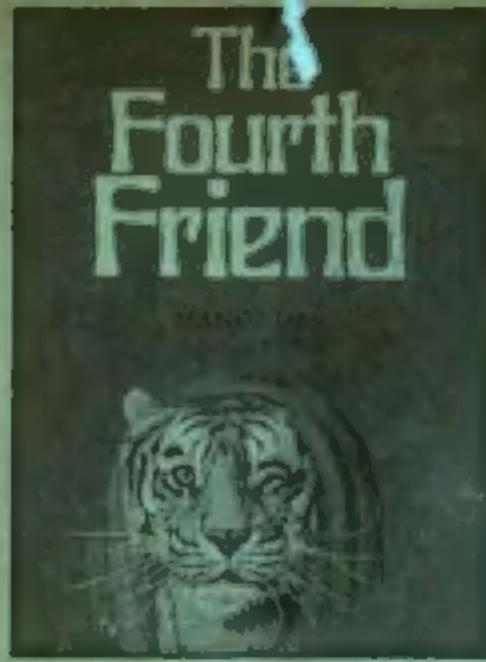
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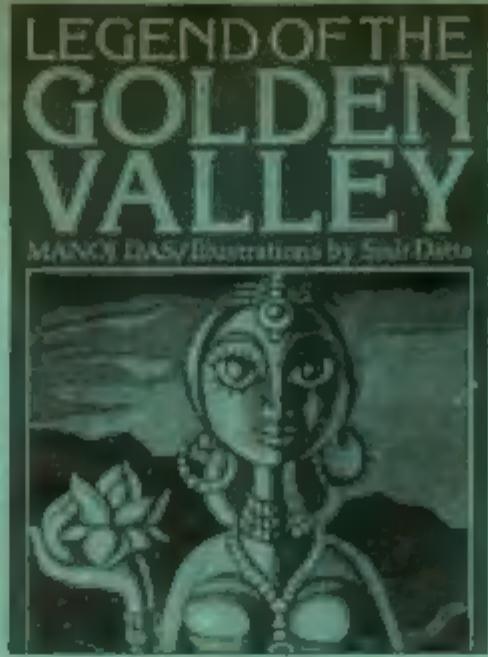


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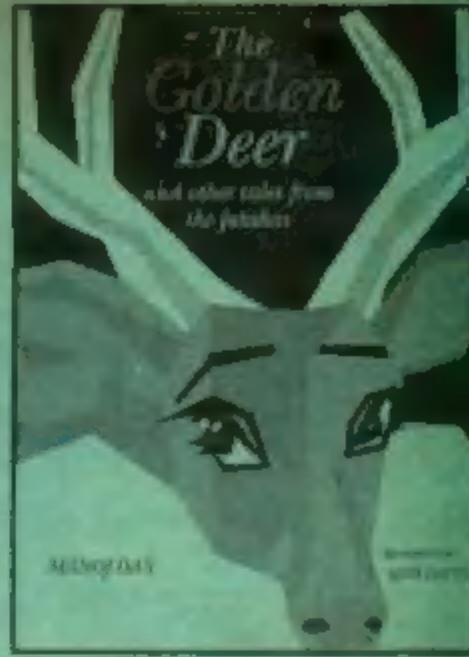




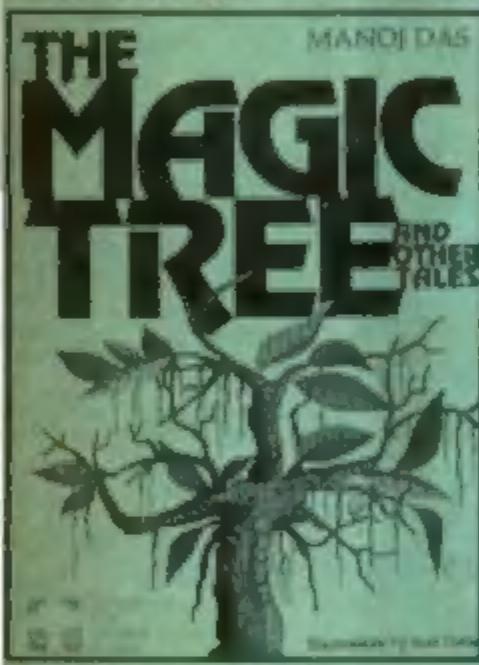
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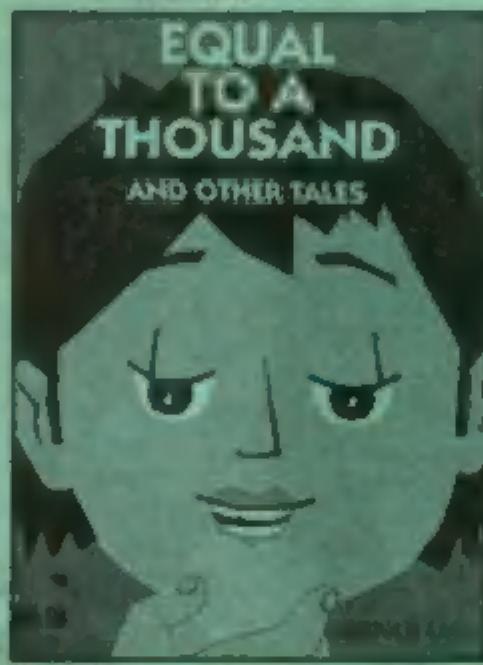
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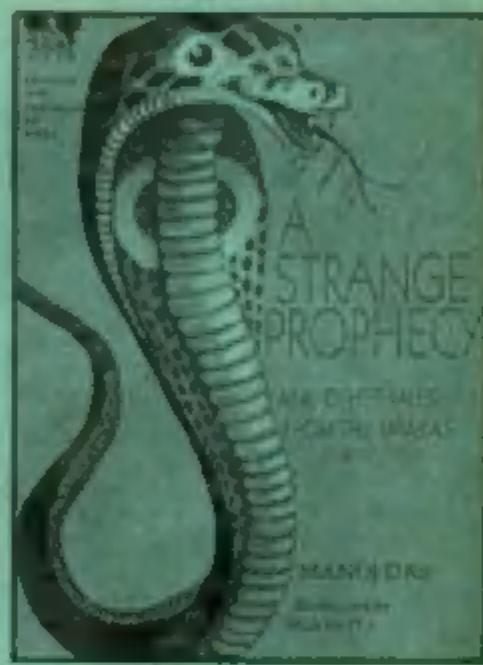
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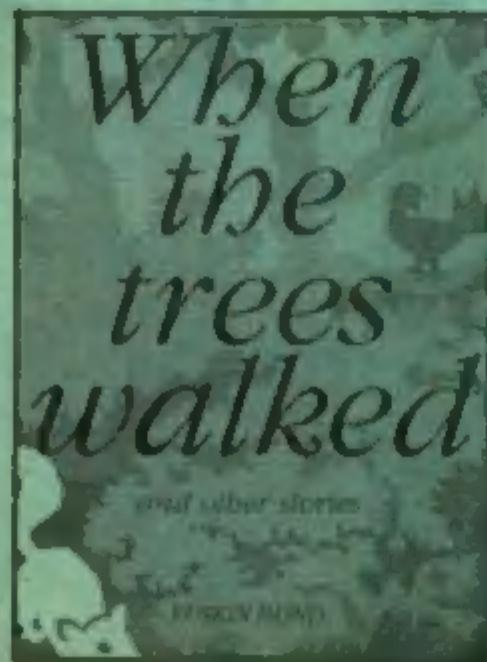
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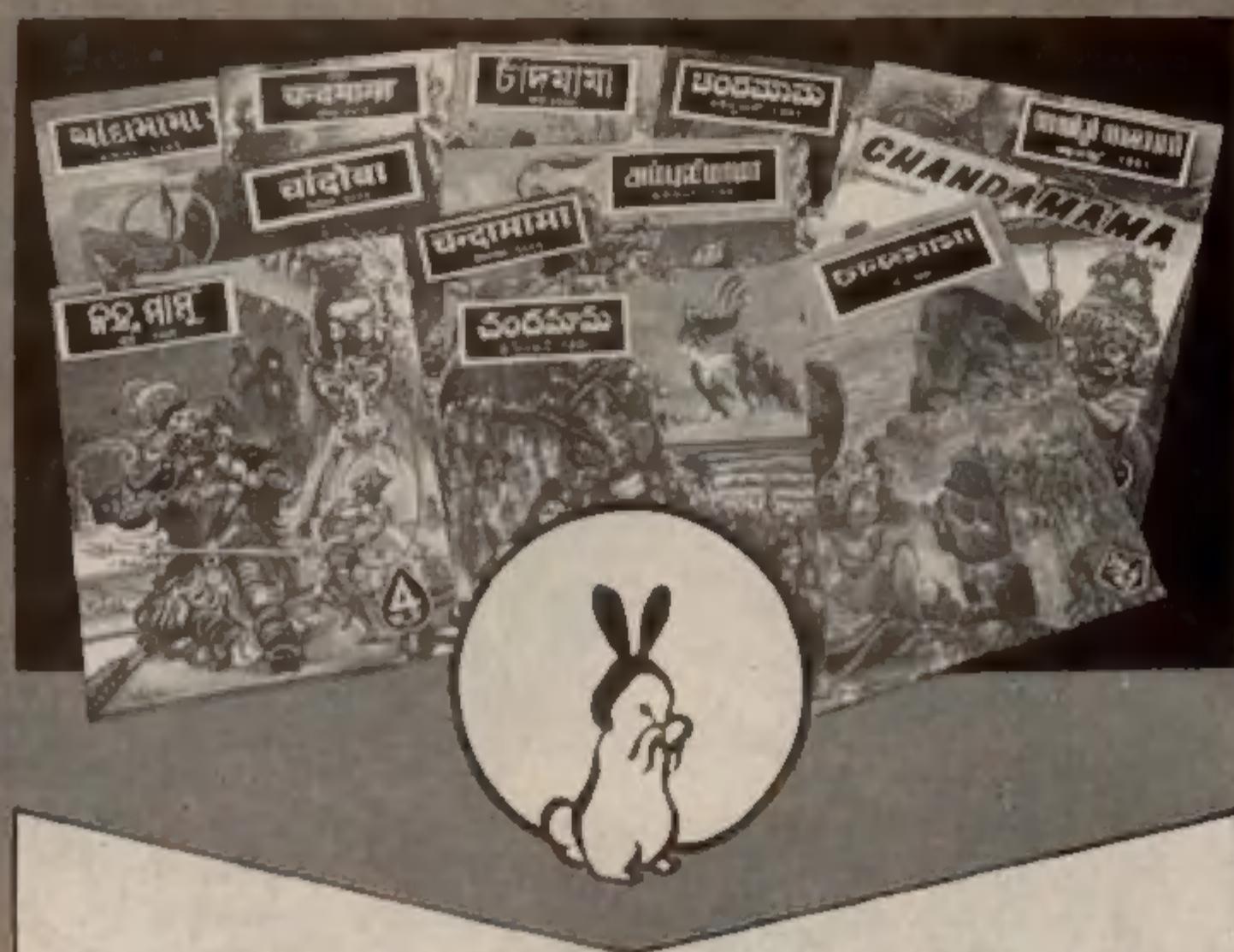
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NEXT ISSUE

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MAHABHARATA: Preparations are afoot for a war between the Pandavas and the Kauravas, who are adamant about preventing their cousins from getting back the kingdom they once held. They seek the help of Lord Krishna, who offers his army to one side and himself alone to the other. Arjuna says they would be happy even if Krishna joins them alone. Duryodhana is happier because he gets the powerful Narayana army. The rulers of other kingdoms choose their sides and reach the different camps with their armies. The envoy sent by King Drupada meets Dhritarashtra and pleads for a peaceful settlement of the dispute between the cousins. Bheeshma supports the envoy's plea, but Karna opposes, saying the Pandavas had lost everything in the game of dice. Dhritarashtra sends Sanjay to the Pandavas, who tell him that they will abide by Krishna's advice.

THE VIRAGO OF VEERPURI: King Veersen and Queen Suryaprabha are joyous over the birth of a son. The wives of Prime Minister Bodheshwar and Army Commander Marthandavarma both give birth to daughters. The royal astrologer has already predicted a turmoil in Veerpuri. The Commander's daughter is under the malefic influences of some planets. She emulates her brother in courage and bravery, but as she grows up she turns a termagant. Her father is unhappy.

COASTAL JOURNEY reaches the Orissa coast. **PLUS** all the pictorial features and puzzles.

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Founder: CHAKRAPANI

Controlling Editor : NAGI REDDI

To become their own masters

May is the month for relaxing. The examinations have been forgotten, the text-books and notebooks have gone back to the shelves. The holiday mood has set in for all those who have been trudging to their schools/colleges for the past one year. But are all of them able to take it easy?

Many of those who have crossed the hurdle of school-leaving tests are these days a worried lot. Admission to colleges is not that easy. The seats are limited; there is very little scope of adding to the number of seats or starting new colleges, though year after year, the number of children appearing for their final examinations and coming out successful is only increasing. So, where do they turn to?

It is not as if everybody can join a medical or an engineering college, or take up the now popular computer science course. Every institution decides on a certain percentage of cut-off marks. They cannot be blamed, because they look for only the brightest of students who would do proud to them eventually.

Career counselling has, thus, become common and those involved in this exercise often place before the anxious students very attractive proposals and prospects. Ultimately, what is everybody's aim? A decent job in a reputed, dependable institution. Again, getting into such positions poses a keen competition.

What most of the students forget is, there is so much scope for self-employment. Why shouldn't they become their own masters? Career guidance has of late taken a new form to prompt children to develop entrepreneurial skills. It is at the same time gratifying to note that the Government has recognised this aspect of human endeavour and comes forward to extend a helping hand to those who show a sincere promise.



THE SPECIAL APPLE



In olden days, once while an emperor of China was holding the royal audience, a villager arrived with a gift.

"What is it that you've brought for me?" the monarch curiously enquired of the man.

"O Great Master! Accept my salutations along with these juicy red apples!" replied the villager, uncovering the silver platter.

Indeed! The beautiful tray displayed a dozen fruit of the perfect shape and colour.

"Well, these are but mere apples

and my bountiful orchards abound in them!" exclaimed the emperor.

"Your Majesty, these are most extraordinary, in fact charmed ones. For, anyone who consumes one of these will live for a hundred years, if not more," replied the visitor.

"Are you sure?" the king asked, looking at the apples again. Indeed, they looked quite special this time.

"My lord, can this subject of yours claim such merits for his fruit unless he is sure? The only condition for the right result is to make me, the one who grows them, a bit happy. Well, I



am willing to live in a decent house with my family in the proximity of the palace for a hundred years, if provided for, and prove that I was true! Alternately, you can make me just a bit happy by paying a hundred gold coins!" said the farmer.

The king was impressed. "I think I should believe you, since you offer yourself to be present here as security for a hundred years. But to arrange for you and your family's stay here is a botheration. Better be off with a hundred gold coins."

The king handed out the amount to the villager.

All the courtiers looked in great admiration at the wonderful fruit on the silver plate. The jester who was also present, suddenly picked up an apple and began to munch it with great relish.

"Guards! Arrest this daring fellow and put him to death forthright!" ordered the ruler trembling with rage.

The officers at once seized the jester who began to shed tears.

"A puny little chap and you have had the audacity to eat the delicacies meant for your sovereign! Of course, it's a wrong punishable only with death. Why do you weep? Are you afraid of dying, coward?" shouted the monarch furiously shaking from head to toes.

"O Great Master!" replied the jester breaking down once more. "I cry, and bitter are my tears because I fear for Your Majesty and not for myself!"

"What do you mean, you naughty monkey? Stop talking to me in riddles!" shouted the emperor glaring at him.



"I weep at the mere thought of what will happen to this vast empire when it suddenly becomes empty of your august presence! For it is not before long that Your Majesty is going to die!" said the jester and once again began to shed tears, as if a bucketful of it was in store!

"You wretched fool, you seem to have lost your mind! What on earth makes you proclaim that I, the great emperor of this great empire, will soon stop living?" demanded the monarch, nervously though.

"Well, my lord," answered the jester at last wiping away his tears. "When I saw these marvellous fruit, called the apples of longevity, I was tempted to eat one, for who would not like to live as long as possible!"

"So what? You audacious, unmannered fellow! You relished a fruit before this noble court!" put in the emperor in a tone of surprise.

"Yes, yes, O great ruler, I did munch

away one of these wonderful fruit, now it is but half way between my throat and my stomach, when already death is tugging me by my collar," replied the jester with great emphasis.

"So what? You committed an unpardonable blunder and you have to die for it! It's that plain and simple!" said the king.

"But can you really imagine what will happen when Your Majesty makes the fatal mistake of eating all the remaining apples? Oh! The thought of it makes me shiver!" answered the jester with a soft chuckle.

"All right, set this cheeky fellow free and give him a bag of gold," ordered the emperor. His anger turned into laughter. Now he began doubting the villager's claim and looked for him. But he had departed with his reward as fast as a mongoose, as the palace guards reported.

- A.K.D.





THE VIRAGO OF VEERPURI

Two *devatas*, Shaktidasa and Hayamukha, once left their heavenly abode and were travelling in the skies to see what was happening in the world. They hovered above Veerpuri for a long time, struck by the peace and tranquillity that prevailed in the kingdom. They had missed such a sight in several other places on the earth where they could observe only turmoil.

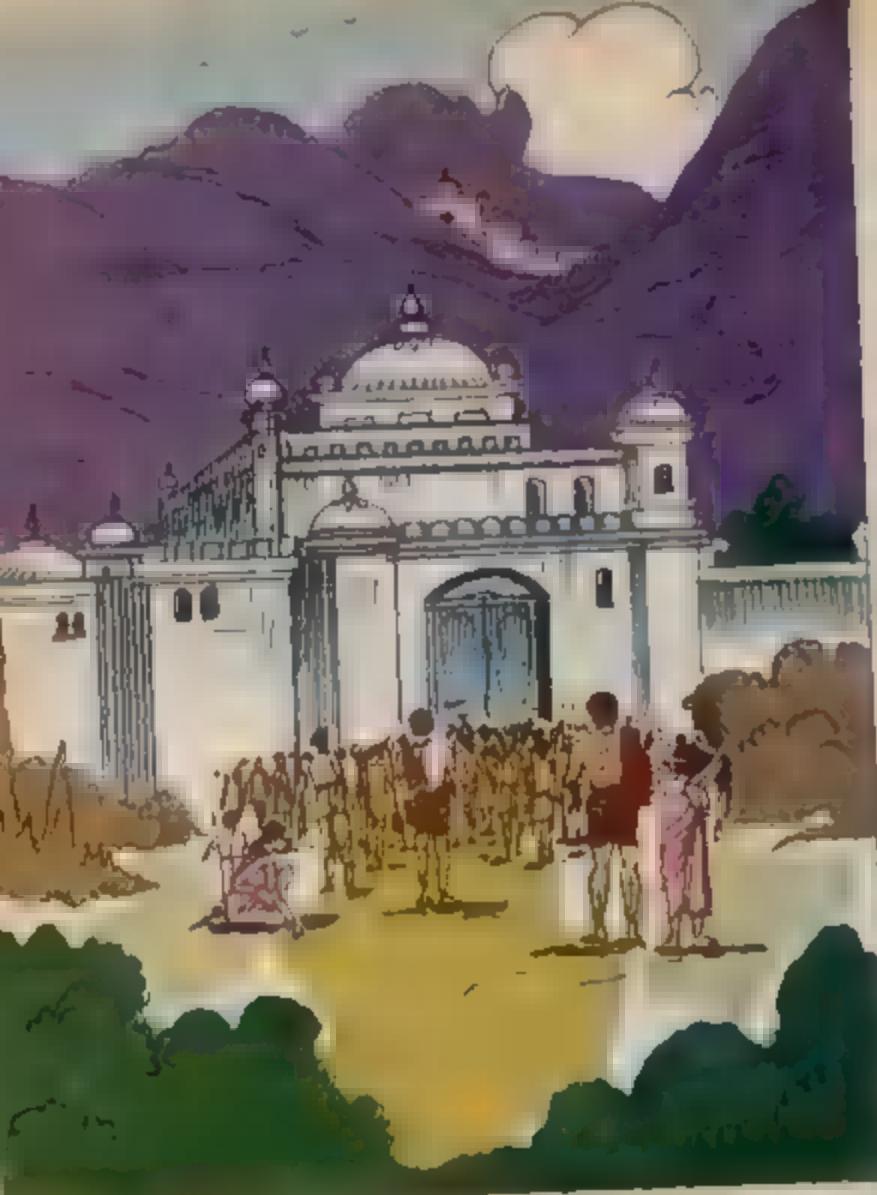
"Will this peace endure?" Hayamukha expressed a doubt.

"The present generation seems to enjoy the peace," responded Shaktidasa, "but what is in store for

the next generation will only be decided by those who are about to be born. If at their birth, the planets favour them, the people will continue to enjoy peace, otherwise things can go wrong for the kingdom."

"But that will be true with every place, don't you think so, Shaktidasa?" remarked Hayamukha. "The destiny will always be in the hands of the new generation. Do you see anything different as far as this kingdom is concerned?"

"I quite agree with your remark, Hayamukha," said Shaktidasa. "Though I was making a general



statement, I somehow feel that it will specially apply for Veerpuri. Do you notice the crowd in front of the palace gates? The people appear to be in a joyous mood. Come on, let's descend and find out for ourselves."

The two devatas descended a little away from the crowd. The moment they touched the ground, they took human form. They moved closer to the crowd, trying to listen to their conversation.

"Did you hear, Somadeva, that our queen is soon to become a mother?"

"Who has not heard of that? Why, we've all been waiting for that good news ever since Prince Soorasen wed Suryaprabha three years ago!"

"But, then, he was away almost

immediately after his wedding, visiting the kingdoms around. And before he could settle down on his return, he had to ascend the throne all of a sudden."

"We'll be fortunate if the queen gives birth to a son!"

"Don't say so! We'll be equally fortunate if it is to be a princess!"



King Soorasen and Queen Suryaprabha of Veerpuri were sad as they had not been blessed with a child. In the first two years of their marriage, Soorasen, at the behest of his father, King Vikrantsen, was visiting the neighbouring kingdoms owing allegiance and paying tribute to Veerpuri. Some of them had delayed paying the annual dues to Veerpuri. However, the king had decided against going to war with them; instead he sent the prince on a mission to use diplomacy in extracting the dues from them. As many of them had attended the prince's wedding at the king's invitation, Vikrantsen thought his vassals would not pose hurdles if Prince Soorasen were to meet them in person and ask for payment.

Unfortunately, the mission took a longer time than was expected. By the time the dues were collected and fresh agreements were signed, it was almost two years since Prince Soorasen had left the kingdom. Suryaprabha had, meanwhile, gone back to Saptagiri where her father

King Rudrapratap was seriously ill and he had expressed a desire to see her. The princess, however, went back to Veerpuri in time to receive her husband at the conclusion of his successful mission.

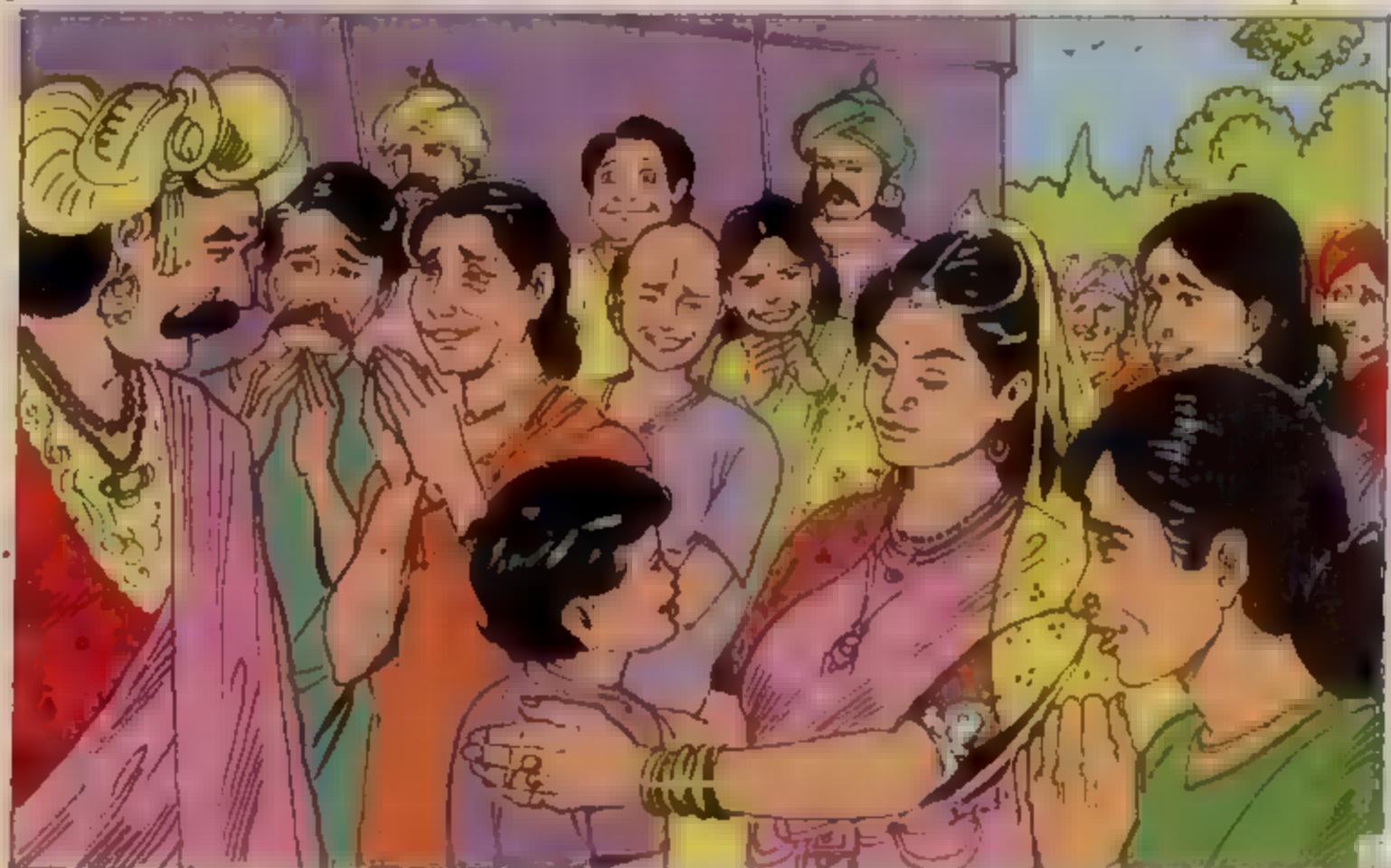
Before they could settle down to a period of peace and pleasure, King Vikrantsen passed away following an unexpected fall from his horse. On the third day of his death, Prince Soorasen ascended the throne, though the coronation had to wait for the thirty-day mourning period to be over. The next five years saw him consolidate his supremacy as over-lord of the neighbouring kingdoms.

Slowly Soorsen and Suryaprabha found themselves brooding over the fact that the queen was yet to become a mother. The royal astrologer was consulted and he advised the king and

queen to undertake a pilgrimage. After all, the kingdom was not without temples, and the astrologer advised that they be renovated before they received the royal worshippers. That would also be an ideal offering the king and queen could make. Wouldn't the gods and goddesses enshrined there be pleased to bless the couple with a child? he argued.

The round of visits they paid to the temples gave an opportunity to the people to meet their king and queen at close quarters and present their grievances, too. Queen Suryaprabha especially endeared herself to them by the affection she showered on the children in the kingdom and their mothers. No wonder they all prayed that the queen soon receive the gift of a child.

Therefore, the news that the queen



was to become a mother gladdened the hearts of the people of Veerpuri, and there was an air of expectancy throughout the kingdom. They would quickly complete their daily chores and crowd near the palace gates waiting for the heralder to come out and give them the glad tidings.

News did come to them, indeed, though they were rather taken by surprise. The wives of Prime Minister Bodheshwar as well as the army commander Marthandvarma were also expecting babies. The Prime Minister was already the father of a two year old girl, Bhanupriya, while the army commander's wife was the mother of a boy, Vijaykrishna was now nearing his second birthday.

This news had also reached King Soorasen, and he thought he should ask the royal astrologer whether he

would see in this coincidence anything strange or extraordinary. He called for the horoscopes of Bhanupriya and Vijaykrishna and studied them well in the presence of the king himself.

"If the Prime Minister were to get a son, and if the army commander were to be blessed with a daughter, the newborns would prove a blessing. Instead, if the Prime Minister's wife gives birth to another girl and if the commander's wife becomes the mother of another boy, the two families will be in trouble before long. However if both children happen to be boys, one of them—I can't say which one—would rise to a high position and would even save the kingdom if an occasion arose. And..." the astrologer paused for a while to make some mental calculations," and if both of them were to be girls, your majesty,



I'm afraid the kingdom will not enjoy peace and prosperity unless, of course, the two families keep a constant vigil over the girls as they grow up and do not fail to propitiate goddess Lokeshwari and give them in marriage to suitors from far-off kingdoms, far away from Veerpuri!"

King Soorasen sat listening to the astrologer without uttering a single word. What he heard about the prospects awaiting the kingdom really bothered him. "Should I tell Bodheshwar and Marthand?" the king sought the advice of the astrologer. "What would you advise me, Goswami Maharaj?"

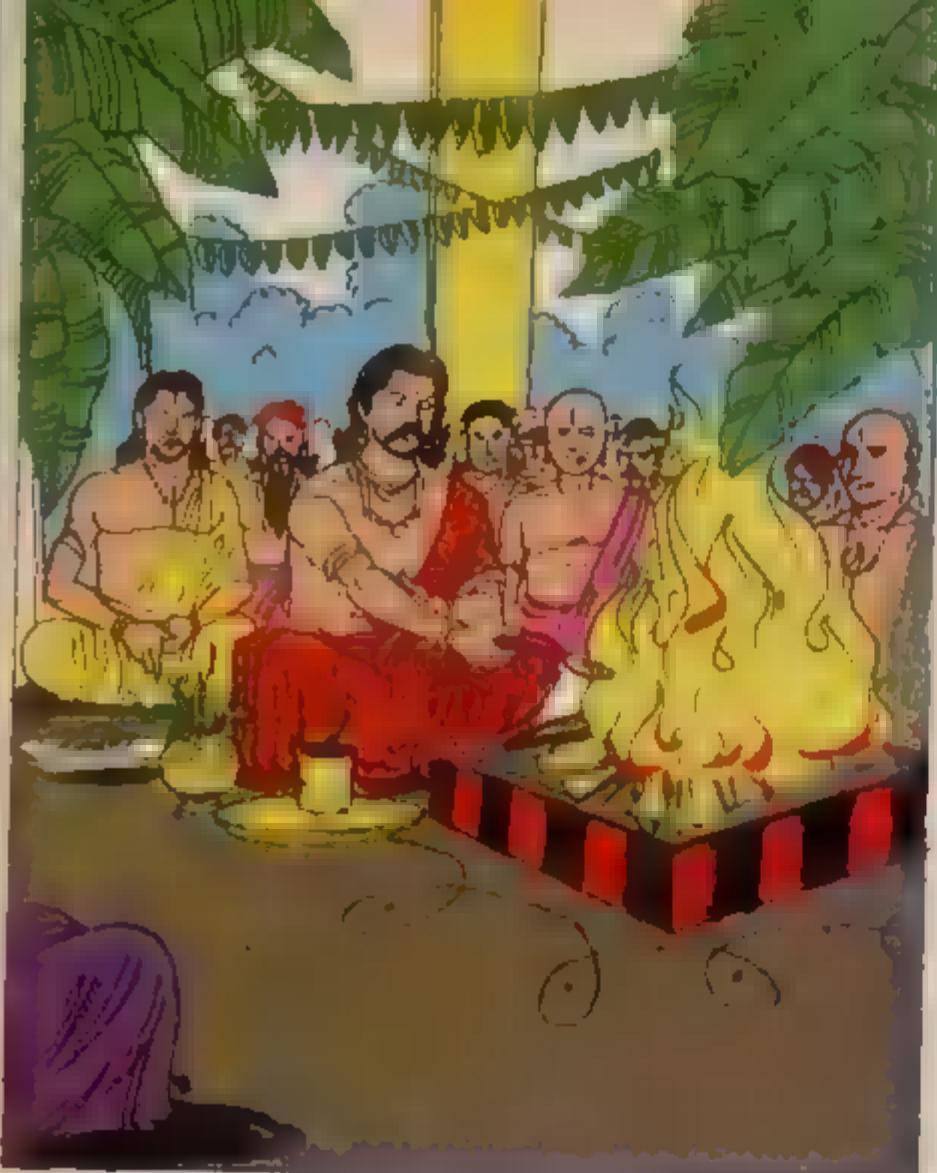
"After all, the babes are yet to be born, your majesty," the astrologer consoled him, "and it will take at least another ten or twelve years for them to grow up and reveal the traits of

their character. So, we've plenty of time to take adequate measures to guard the kingdom and protect the people. Let the Prime Minister and army commander be not given an opportunity to get agitated lest their attention is drawn elsewhere, preventing them from performing their duties and functions, your majesty."

"If you feel that way," said King Soorasen, "then let the readings from the horoscopes and your deductions be known to only the two of us. We shall disclose them to others only when an occasion comes. Meanwhile I shall be watchful for any development."

"What I said should not unduly bother you, your majesty," remarked the astrologer. "The kingdom is safe because all our neighbours are friendly





and none of them has any grouse against Veerpuri. Now, your majesty, if you'll permit me, I shall take leave of you and will be available at your command."

King Soorasen accompanied Goswami Maharaj till one of the guards stepped forward to escort the royal astrologer out of the palace. Though he had tried his best to put the king at ease, Soorasen did not stop worrying about the future of the kingdom. Suddenly he realised that the astrologer had not given him any hint whether he and Suryaprabha would be blessed with a son, or a daughter. Goswami Maharaj was all the while talking only about the babies to be born to the Prime Minister and

the army commander. The king decided that if a daughter were to be born to him, he would bring her up as a boy so that she would be capable of helping him in times of difficulties and be ready to succeed him as the ruler of Veerpuri. However, his joy knew no bounds when a week later he was informed of the birth of a son. The astrologer was immediately sent for to cast the horoscope of the baby. Goswami Maharaj assured him that the birth of a prince was the harbinger of prosperity for the kingdom. He named him Veerendrakumar with the concurrence of the king.

The news of the birth of the prince soon reached all nooks and corners of the kingdom and people thronged at the gates of the palace to get a look at their future king. The king made arrangements for an announcement that the little prince would be shown to the public on the conclusion of a seven-day *homa* as a thanksgiving offering to goddess Vajreshwari and for the health and long life of the prince.

The *homa* was conducted under the supervision of Goswami Maharaj and a retinue of pujaris from the many temples in Veerpuri. The temples themselves had special pujas both in the morning and evening on all the seven days. The people of Veerpuri made it a point to visit the nearest temple to offer their special prayers.

On the seventh day in the evening,

King Soorasen and Queen Suryaprabha gave a public audience. The two held the little Prince Veerendrakumar by turns as the people filed past the royal couple. Many of them offered flowers, with some of them even placing little gifts for the prince in front of the king and queen, who smiled their acceptance. When they came out of the palace, they smiled to each other reflecting their personal joy over the birth of the prince.

The next day, Prime Minister Bodheshwar sought a special audience with the king, to tell him that a daughter had been born to him. The king gave him a reward and the queen sent one of her pearl necklaces as her personal gift.

Two days later, it was the turn of the army commander, Marthandvarma. He too had been blessed with a daughter. The king rewarded him suitably and the queen sent a diamond necklace as her gift.

It was only after a few days that

King Soorasen remembered what the astrologer had predicted if both babies were to be girls.

The king sent for Goswami Maharaj. The messenger came back and told him that the royal astrologer was not at home. According to his wife, he had left for the neighbouring Kingdom of Senapuri where the queen had given birth to a boy and King Mahendravarma had sought the services of Goswami Maharaj to cast the prince's horoscope. That meant, he would be away from Veerpuri at least for a week. Soorasen thought it would be improper to recall Goswami Maharaj from Senapuri, for he might even apprehend that something was already amiss in Veerpuri. So, he decided to await the astrologer's return. He made arrangements to bring the royal astrologer to the palace as soon as he came back from Senapuri. The next few days were full of anxiety for King Soorasen.

(To continue)



A dream that goes up in smoke!

★ *Reader Aritra Senyal, of Lalgola, in Murshidabad district of W. Bengal, wants to know the meaning of the expression 'pipe dream'.*

It is an informal way of describing any fantastic notion, a fanciful idea, which may prove unreal or futile. The origin is from a person entertaining fanciful thoughts while relaxing with a pipe. Earlier, it used to be described as an opium-smoker's fantasy. Example : "She could not believe that her plans for a career in films had all been merely a pipe dream".

★ *Reader Birendra Gochhayal, of Balasore, Orissa, is confused about the use of 'a' and 'an'. He asks : Why should it be 'a history' and 'an hotel', when both nouns start with 'h' which is a consonant and not a vowel?*

The grammar book is clear—that a common noun starting with a consonant will take the indefinite article 'a' and the one beginning with a vowel will take 'an'—except in the case of 'u' which has the trait of a consonant, in words like uniform (unlike umbrella) where the indefinite article 'a' is used. In the case of hotel, the word once used to be pronounced as 'otel', though nowadays 'h' is aspirated, like in history.

■ *Reader A.K. Basu, of Sheikhupura, W. Bengal, wishes to know the meaning of the expression "L'affair".*

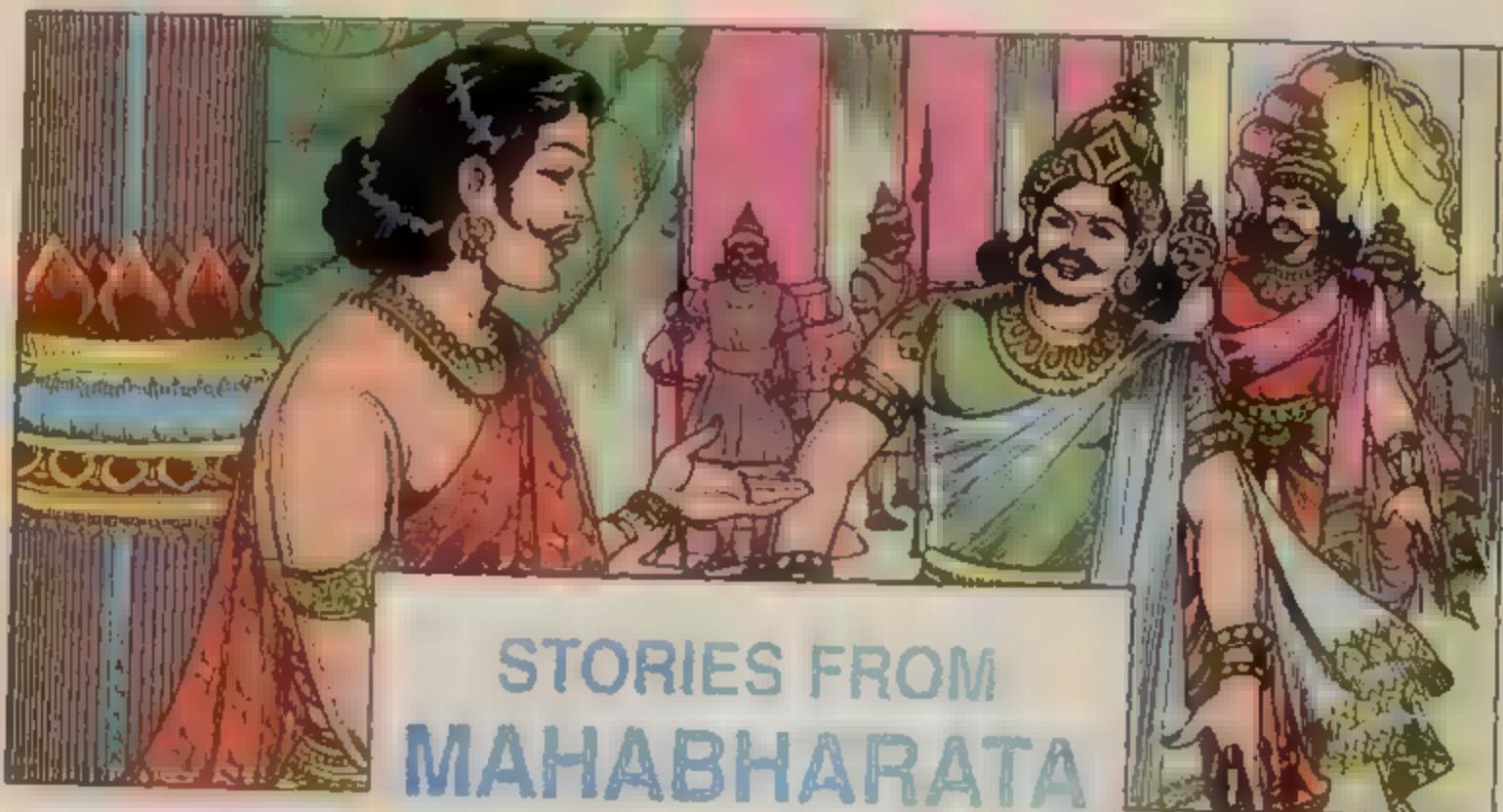
The correct spelling of this French expression—commonly used by the print media—is L'affaire, where the prefix 'L' stands for 'the' (definite article). It denotes an episode or an incident arousing speculation and scandal, like L'affaire Bofors, which will simply mean the Bofors 'affair'.

★ *What is meant by the idiom 'to throw a big bash'? asks Jyotiranjan Biswas, of Durgapur.*

It is a colloquial way of saying "to hold a big party".

★ *What is the difference between a foster-daughter and an adopted daughter? asks Rupesh M. Shinde, of Nipani, Belgaum.*

A girl nursed or brought up by someone who is not her real parent is a foster-daughter. Whereas, an adopted daughter is a girl, voluntarily taken as one's own child through legal formalities. An adopted daughter will have legal claims over her parent's property, while a foster daughter does not enjoy such rights.



STORIES FROM MAHABHARATA

The story so far: The enmity between the Kauravas and the Pandavas has reached a crisis. The Pandava princes, after listening to the profound wisdom of Lord Krishna, send an envoy to Hastinapura, to stake their claim for what lawfully belongs to them. Although Vidura and Bhishma counsel King Dhritarashtra against opposing the combined might of Arjuna and Krishna, Duryodhana remains defiant and even the entreaties of Queen Gandhari fail to move him. War appears inevitable.

After the departure of Lord Krishna to Dwaraka, Yudhishtira and King Virata began to prepare for war. Word went out to all the clansmen and feudal lords under the Pandavas. Soon, with flags fluttering in the air and bugles heralding their approach, all the kings and chieftains friendly to the Pandavas began to arrive with their armies.

The Kauravas, on their part, began to assemble a huge army. Everywhere there was talk of war. They, too, summoned their friends.

Drupada called his priest and said,

"Sir, you know what a good man Yudhishtira is and how, despite protests by Vidura, Duryodhana obligated the Pandavas into rolling the dice and with the aid of the evil Sakuni, defeated them. So, go and tell Dhritarashtra that the Pandavas have completed their period of exile according to the terms imposed upon them. The kingdom now belongs to them. Duryodhana will never part with the kingdom, I know, but if you speak to Vidura, that honest man will try to persuade the Kauravas into giving up their false claim. I am

sending you as my good messenger. Duryodhana will treat you honourably, I'm sure."

The same day the priest left for Hastinapura.

Meanwhile, Yudhishtira sent Arjuna to Dwaraka to enlist Lord Krishna's assistance in the coming war. Duryodhana, too, went to Dwaraka on the same mission.

The two sworn enemies entered Lord Krishna's palace at the same time and were escorted into his bed-chamber. Krishna was in deep slumber when the two were ushered into the chamber. Duryodhana sat down near his head and Arjuna stood near the Lord's outstretched feet respectfully.

A little later, Krishna woke up and his eyes fell on Arjuna.

He smiled and said, "Arjuna! I am glad to see you. But what brings you

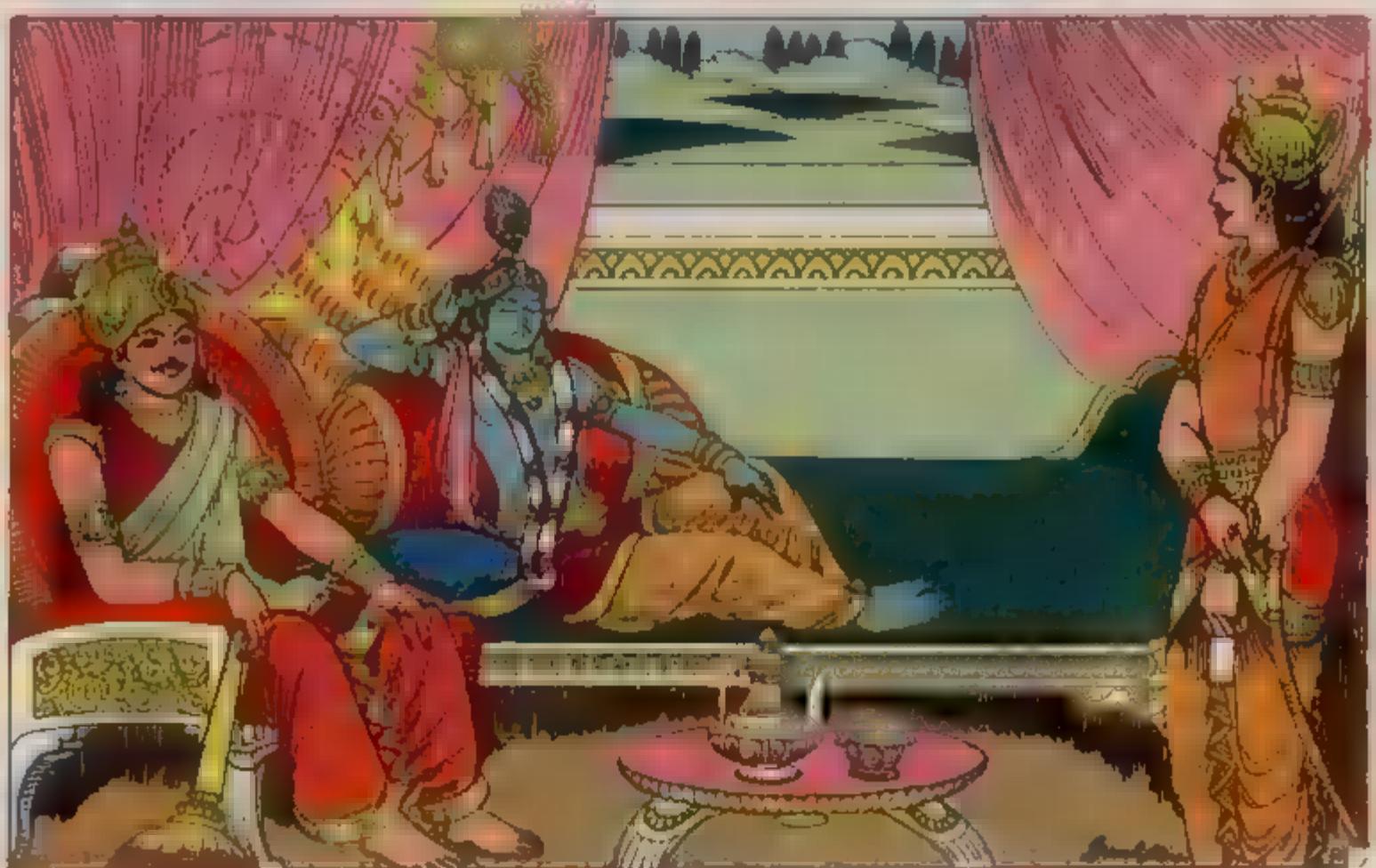
here at this hour?"

Then Duryodhana spoke up from the other end of the bed, "Krishna, I had arrived first. You don't seem to have noticed me!"

Krishna turned, smiled sweetly, and replied, "Duryodhana! Is it indeed you? When I woke up, the first person I saw was Arjuna. Never mind. After all, Arjuna is younger, so it is only proper that he should state his business first."

Arjuna said, "Krishna, in the event of a war between the Pandavas and the Kauravas, I want you to help us."

Duryodhana promptly took up the cue and said, "Krishna, I came to you on the same mission. You are dear to both of us. Besides, you are an impartial judge of our affairs. I know you will not take sides. Therefore, I want you to help us."



Krishna cupped his chin in his hands, looked at each in turn, and said, "You've put me in a dilemma. I should like to help both of you. So this is what I'll do. I'll lend my army to the one who wants it and I'll place my personal services at the disposal of the other. So, choose. But first, let Arjuna make his decision."

Duryodhana was alarmed at these words. What would Arjuna choose? It would not matter much if he chose Krishna who, after all, was only one individual. But if he chose the well-equipped and powerful Narayana army, then all was lost!

But Arjuna's words dispelled his fears. "Excellent!" said Arjuna. "The Pandavas want nothing more than yourself on their side. We don't need your army."

Duryodhana was elated. Now he

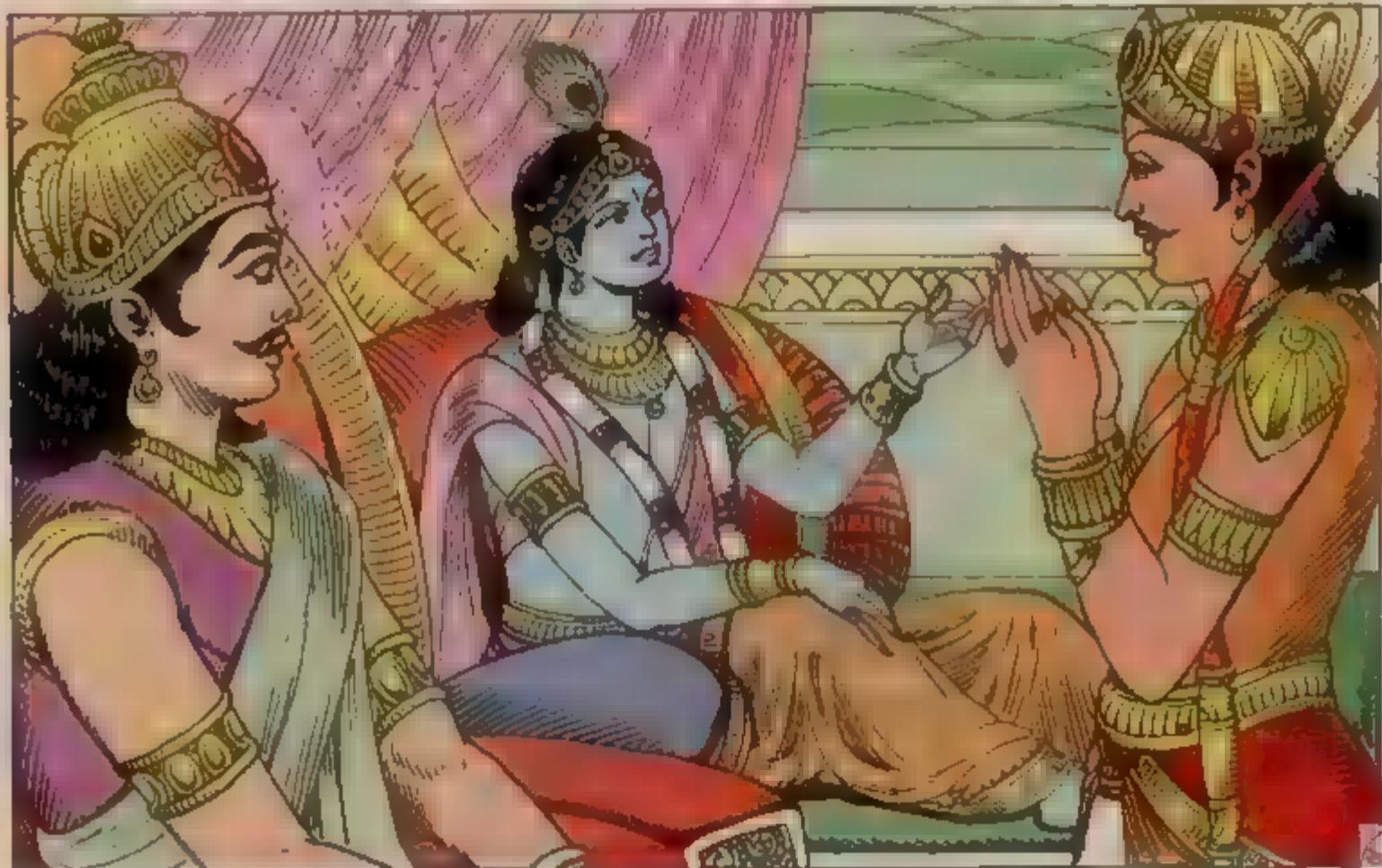
could command the vast forces of Lord Krishna. Hardly able to hide his joy, he said, "I want only your armed forces."

"So be it," replied Lord Krishna beaming at him. Then Krishna turned to Arjuna and said, "Arjuna, why don't you ask for my army? Don't you want to increase the strength of your army?"

Arjuna replied modestly, "Oh, Lord! No matter how vast the enemy forces, as long as we have you to guide and counsel us, how can we ever lose?"

Then Balarama, who had entered the room and had been a silent witness to all this, said firmly, "I shall be neutral in this war. However, Arjuna, you have my best wishes for ultimate victory."

Duryodhana, happy at the thought that the redoubtable Balarama would



remain neutral, went in search of Kritavarma who lent him a portion of his sizeable army.

Arjuna returned to Upablaviya after Krishna promised to be his charioteer in the ensuing conflict.

Meanwhile, Salya, Nakula's uncle, received the Pandava summons to join them, and accordingly with a huge army set out from his capital. When Duryodhana was informed of this, he sent out his men to entertain Salya's troops all along their route and provide them with ample hospitality on the way. Salya naturally assumed that all this was Yudhishthira's doing and so he exclaimed, "How can I ever repay such kindness and such hospitality? I must help them to win the war." When he spoke thus, he had in mind the Pandavas, but Duryodhana who had

overheard these words now came and bowed before him.

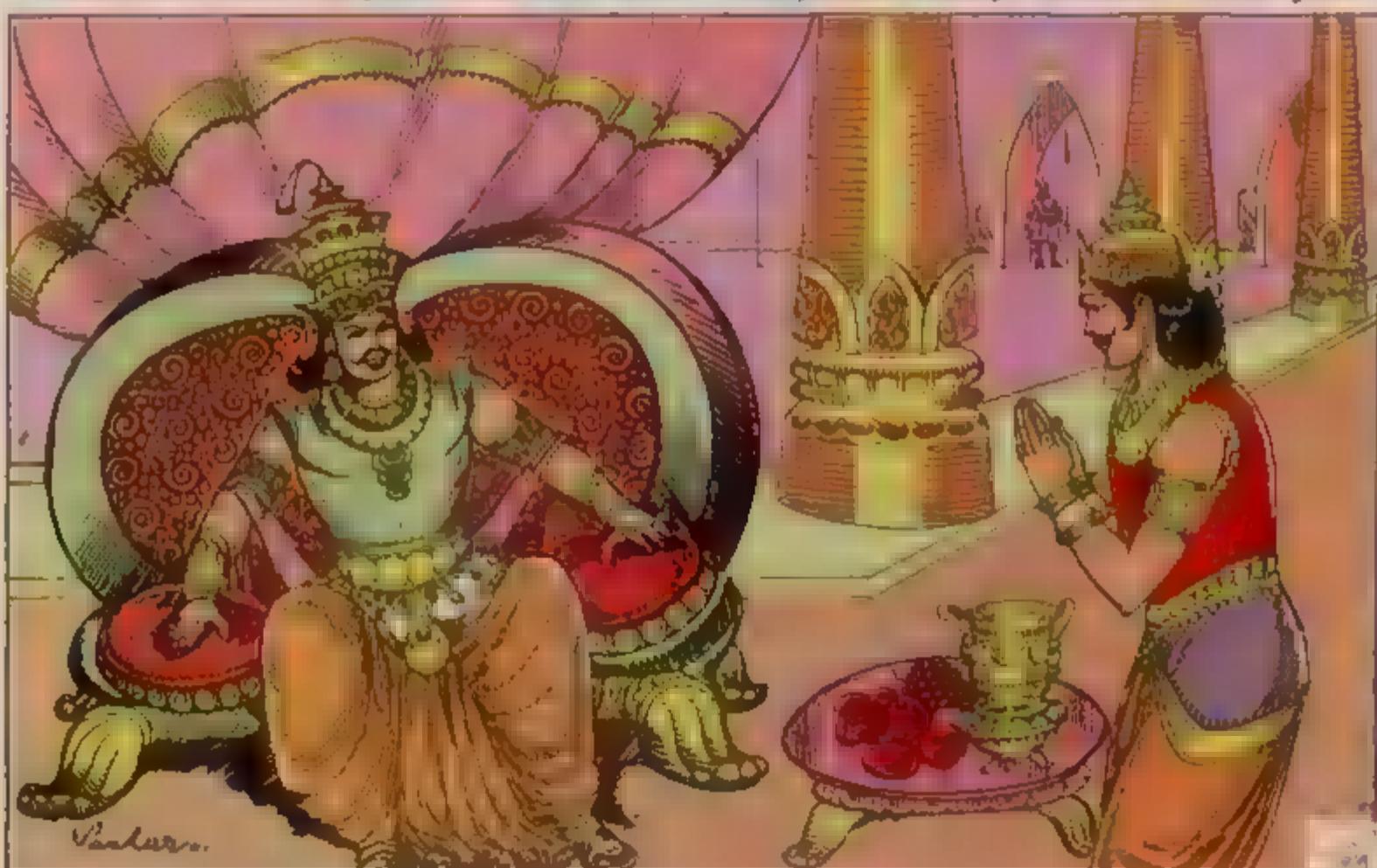
"Sir, it was I who arranged to keep your troops in comfort. Therefore, you must help me."

Poor Salya could hardly go back on his word and so, rather reluctantly, he promised to be on Duryodhana's side. Then he went in search of the Pandavas and explained apologetically the reasons for the switch over in his allegiance.

Yudhishthira comforted him and said, "Uncle, you can't go back on your word now. But Karna will request you to be his charioteer, because no one else can drive his chariot. At that time, you must curb Karna's fierceness and protect Arjuna from his barbs."

Salya agreed to do this.

Then, looking at the Pandavas compassionately, he said, "How you



must have suffered during your exile in the forest! I tell you, though Duryodhana has a greater army, ultimate victory will be yours, because you have truth and justice on your side."

Then Salya narrated the story of Dwastaprajapathi to illustrate his remark.

Dwastaprajapathi was a powerful prophet who created the three-headed giant Vishwarupa to defeat Indra. The latter alarmed at the increasing powers of this Titan sent his dancing girls to weaken his fierce concentration. But it was of no avail. Finally, Indra went to battle and hurling his bolts of thunder, killed Vishwarupa.

Dwastaprajapathi became angry at his reverse and created a second and more powerful Titan called Vritra, who launched a fierce attack against the ruler of the gods. In the ensuing battle, Vritra caught hold of Indra and swallowed him, but the latter came

out through the mouth and ran for dear life.

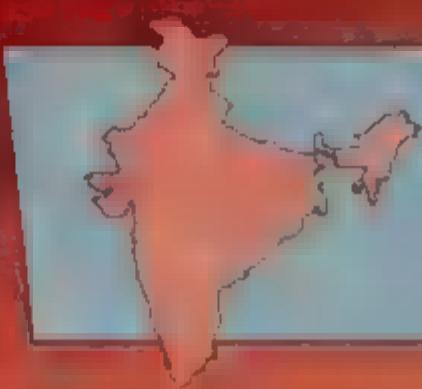
Then, accompanied by the gods, he went to Lord Vishnu and prayed for his help to destroy Vritra. Lord Vishnu said, "Indra, it's better if you sue for peace. Bide your time. You can't defeat him now."

So Indra feigned friendship and made peace with Vritra who had also been similarly advised by several prophets. Some days later, while Vritra was strolling along the sea-shore, Indra crept behind him and treacherously slew him with his bolts of thunder.

But the sin of the two murders, that of Vishwarupa and Vritra, fell on Indra and he went into hiding. Thus the gods had no ruler and so they decided to nominate Nakusha as their king. They went in a body and offered the crown to him.

- To continue





HEAVEN ON EARTH

The Nilgiri mountains, also known as the Blue Hills, are situated in the Western Ghats. The grassland around is incredibly bountiful in wild flowers consisting of more than 30 species. The hills are also the home of the Nilgiri Tahr, a species of mountain goat, of which only a thousand survive.

The 'Kurinji flower' blooms only once in twelve years and covers the entire hillside with its blue colour. Animals like the 'sambar', 'gaur' and leopard have



made the dense woodlands their homes. Many kinds of Balsam trees are found here. The branches are covered with moss and lichen. One can also find exotic orchids in abundance. The 'Blue Hills' are truly a breathtaking sight and for many it is a glimpse of a tiny part of heaven on earth.

-Shital

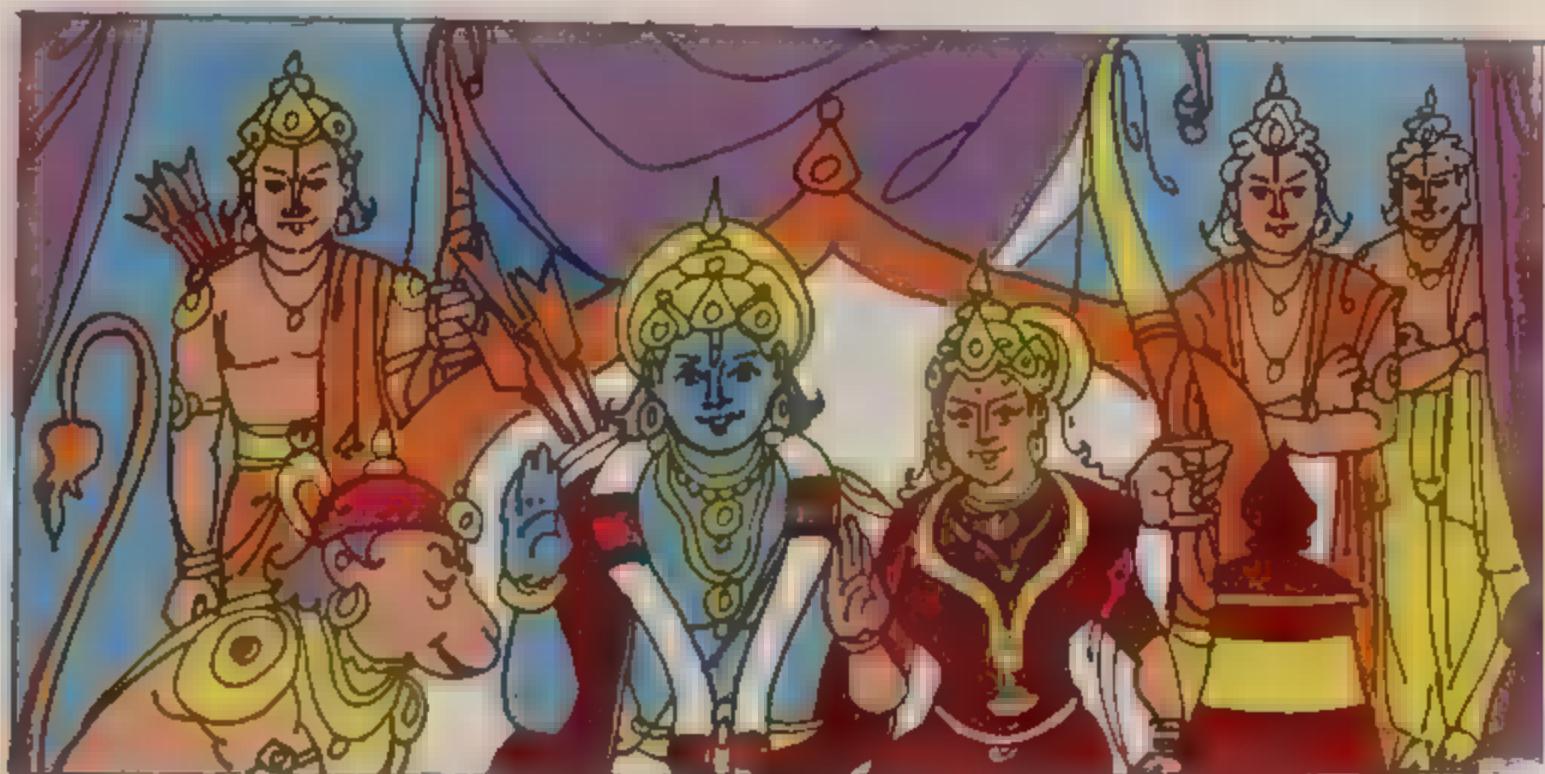
IKSHAKU : THE FOUNDER OF SOLAR DYNASTY

To a great extent, the civilization and culture of India were made by two kinds of people, the Rishis and the Kings. Every Indian knows about a number of Rishis, such as Vasistha and Viswamitra and a number of kings such as Rama and Janaka.

While Viswamitra was a king who abandoned his throne and became a Rishi, Janaka was a king who continued to rule his kingdom, but was a Rishi in his personal life. Several of the kings were great heroes, explorers, nation-builders and philosophers. Some of the kings set examples in good administration, and the greatest among such kings was Rama. His reign, remembered as Ramarajya, remains unsurpassed in popular imagination, for just and noble rule.

The founder of the dynasty to which Rama belonged was King IKSHAKU. The dynasty is known as the Solar Dynasty, because Ikshaku's father was Vaivasvata Manu, Vaivasvata meaning one who is an emanation of the Sun-god.

We do not know much about Ikshaku himself, but so many of his descendants became illustrious kings, including Harishchandra, Sagara, and Bhagiratha. You will read about them in the course of this series.





THE INCAS

The Incas were Indian people who originated in Peru. They lived mostly around the capital Cuzco. The Inca society was strictly divided into classes ranging from the wealthy ruling class to the slaves. The Incas worshipped the god 'Viracocha'. The Inca artists and craftsmen were highly skilled and some produced large quantities of original artifacts, some of which survive even today. The Incas grew corn, potatoes and other vegetables which made up their basic diet. The llama was a domesticated animal and was very important in everyday life.



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RAINBOW



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SNOWMAN

The word 'Eskimo' means one who eats raw meat! Eskimos eat seal meat and use seal skins for their tents and clothes. They are famous for their boats which are called "kayaks". A man in a "kayak" wears a waterproof coat of seal skin. On land the Eskimos travel in sledges pulled by a team of dogs. Their houses are called igloos. The Eskimos believe that all animals and other natural objects have spirits in them. Staying with an Eskimo family would be an unique experience!

-Shital



New Tales of King Vikram
and the Vampire

BORROWED BEAUTY

Dark was the night and weird the atmosphere. It rained from time to time. Gusts of wind shook the trees. Between thunderclaps and the moaning of jackals could be heard the eerie laughter of spirits. Flashes of lightning revealed fearsome faces.

But King Vikram did not swerve a bit. He climbed the ancient tree and brought the corpse down. However, as soon as he began crossing the desolate cremation ground with the corpse lying on his shoulder, the vampire that possessed the corpse spoke: "O King, normally you should be enjoying a good sleep at this hour of the night. Instead of doing that, what makes you go through this strange rite? I'm rather ashamed of you. O King! You're acting like a servant of some master. A king should never be a servant; he's always the master. By the way, are you trying to master a *mantra*? Mind you, whatever is achieved with the help of a mantra or magic will not last long. I've a fine example for that. Listen to me, carefully." And the vampire then began his narration.



Manikyapuri was once ruled by Madhukarvarma. He and Queen Suchitra looked like they had been made for each other. If one was handsome, the other was charming. The king was tall and strong; the queen had a perfect figure—neither lean nor fat. After a long married life, they had a baby daughter born to them. Instead of being happy, they were disappointed, for, the baby was ugly-looking unlike her parents. However, that did not lessen their affection for her. They looked after her well. Ambika soon grew up into a girl, accomplished in many fields—like music, dance, and painting. There was no one to excel her in any of these forms of art.

She soon reached marriageable age. Would anyone come forward to marry an ugly girl even though she might be a princess? worried the king. One moonlit night Ambika sat beneath a tree full of flowers in the royal garden, singing one of her favourite songs. While singing, she also played on the veena. At that very moment, a heavenly nymph called Chandramukhi was flying over the palace. She was attracted by the music coming from the garden below. She came down and stood near the princess.

"What a divine music! I've never heard anyone singing so beautifully!" she complimented Ambika.

The princess was taken aback by the sudden appearance of a heavenly beauty in front of her and the unexpected compliments from such a person. Ambika was dumbfounded for some time. She remained staring at the stranger, who now caught hold of both her hands. Chandramukhi realised that the girl was looking at her perfect figure and appreciating her beauty.

"Oh! I understand why you are looking at me like that. Don't worry," she said. "Wear this ring. It has some magical powers. Whenever you wear this, you'll look beautiful, like me. But you must remember two things. You should not visit any temple while you have this ring on you. If you go to a temple wearing the ring, then it will lose its powers. And if you were to

look into a mirror, you will see your ugliness in it. However, all others will find you good-looking." After saying this Chandramukhi disappeared just as suddenly as she had appeared a little while earlier.

Was she dreaming? wondered Princess Ambika. Was that heavenly damsel really talking to her? Did she at all give her any magical ring? Ambika looked at her fingers. Of course, there was the ring, along with the rings she was already wearing. She pulled it out and held it in her palm for a while and then put it back on her fingers. Anyway, she could not believe that it all had happened all of a sudden, and so unexpectedly, too.

By then she was joined by her father and mother who had just then come in to the royal garden. Surprise was in store for them. They saw a girl of paramount beauty in their garden. Who could that be? They had never seen this charming girl in the palace or in the garden before. And strangely she was holding their daughter Ambika's veena, as if she had just ended playing a song. "Who are you?" asked King Madhukar. "Are you any of the princess's friends?"

"Where's my daughter Ambika?" queried Queen Suchitra. "I see her veena here. But where has she disappeared?"

The girl laughed. "I'm Ambika! Your daughter! Don't you recognise me?"



"We do recognise your laughter, Ambika," said the king. "But...."

"But, you look so different, so beautiful, Ambika!" her mother completed the sentence for the king. "How come?"

"I'm no longer ugly, am I?" said Ambika. "I must be looking like one of those *apsaras*? Yes, something has happened to me, mother! See this ring. It has some magical powers. A while ago, a heavenly beauty descended on this garden and gave it to me!" She then narrated all that had happened.

Queen Suchitra was now curious. She held Ambika's hand and slowly removed the ring and put it on her own finger. There was a sudden

change in her. She herself was turned into a woman of unparalleled beauty. The king could not believe his eyes. As he stared at the queen's face, and then at his daughter's face, which now looked ugly once again, Suchitra took off the ring and put it back on Ambika's finger, who was now turned into a beauty. Both the king and queen were now convinced that the ring really had magical powers.

All the three now returned to their chambers. The next morning Ambika woke up soon and did not wait for her maids to come and help her in dressing up. When she came out of her chambers and saw her maids in the corridors.

She heard one of them remark: "How I wish our princess was also a beauty like her!"

Another maid remarked: "Who could this be... coming out of the princess's chambers?"

"Maybe she's someone related to the royal family."

"All of you are wrong!" said Ambika, laughing, patting them on their shoulders. "I'm Ambika, your princess! Yesterday I received the blessings of a heavenly beauty who met me in the royal garden." She then told them about Chandramukhi.

Days passed. Everybody was excited about Ambika's newly acquired beauty. But she herself was sad. Whenever she looked into the mirror, she found herself as ugly as before.

She began cursing herself. How could she get out of the magic and yet remain a beauty?

It was her birthday, and as usual her father the king had arranged for festivities inside the palace as well as outside. There were dances, music recitals, and magic performances. The magician was assisted by his daughter. She placed the nut of a mango on the ground and covered it with a basket. The magician went up to the basket and tapped it with his magic wand. As he went back to his position, the girl came forward to raise the basket, slowly, and there arose a fairly big mango sapling, and at the end of a branch there could be seen a tiny little mango as well!

The crowd cheered the magician, who bowed low to accept their appreciation. He went back to the sapling, plucked the mango and cut it into pieces and distributed them among his audience. Everybody said it was ripe and was very sweet.

The magician continued his performance. He asked his daughter to stand in the middle of the arena. "This is my daughter, and all of you can see she is no beauty. In fact, she had some suitors, but they all went away when they saw her ugly face. But to me, she is a beauty, because I can easily make her one! Please watch!" He then touched her all over with his wand, and in no time, in front of everybody, she was turned into a beauty.

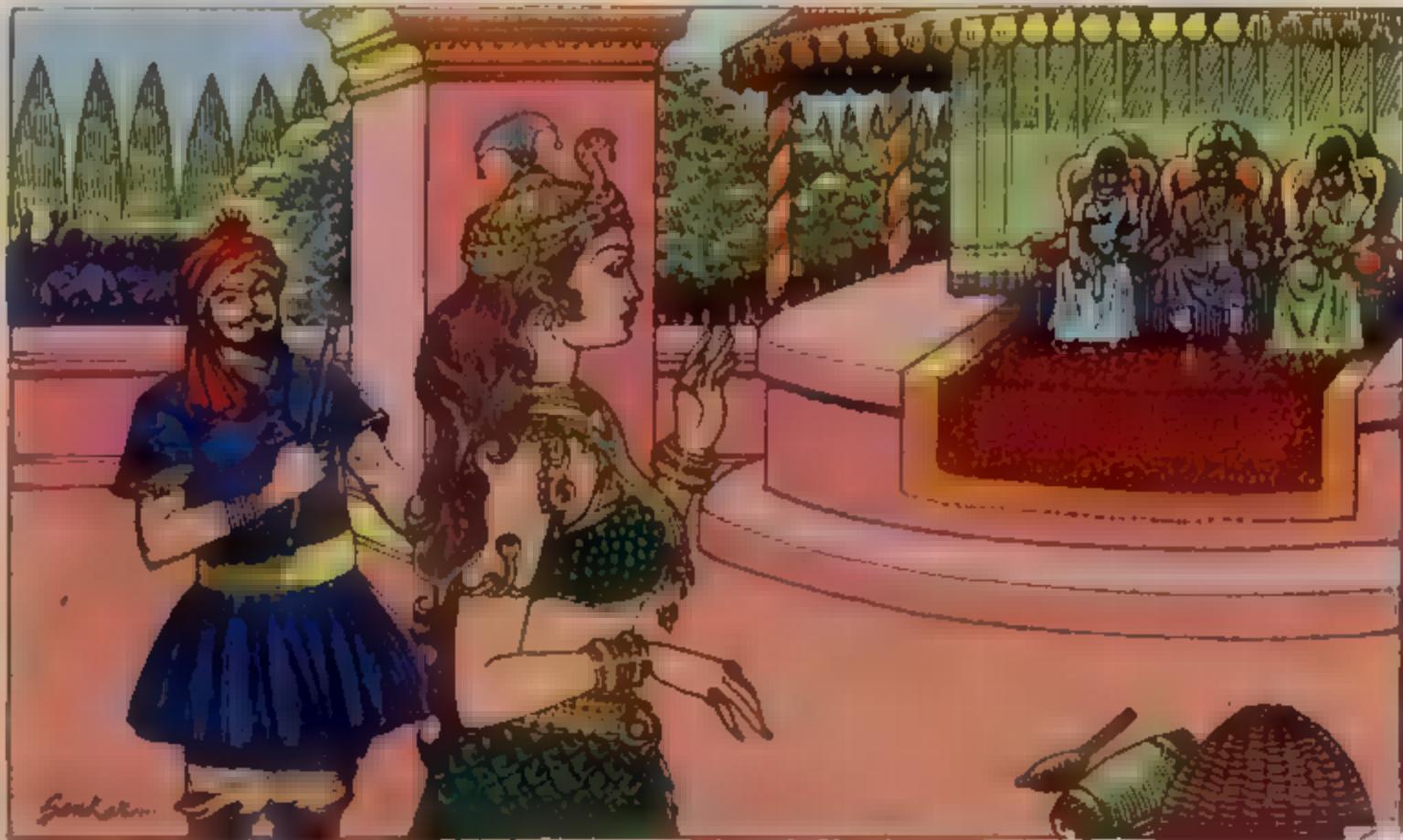
The girl now wore a different dress and had even a crown on her head decorated like a coiled serpent. The audience cheered and clapped loudly. The magician waited till the clapping died down and then he tapped her with his wand and the girl assumed her old form with an ugly face. "Now, you all must have realised that what I'm able to show is not anything real, but only an illusion."

The king called the magician and rewarded him with a necklace, taking it off his neck. He also gave him a velvet purse full of coins. The magician now moved on to where Princess Ambika was seated. She was in a reverie. The magic of converting an ugly looking girl into a beauty had made her think. True the magician had himself described it as an illusion. What is beauty? she wondered.

Is it anything real? Beauty is only to the eyes of the beholder.

Suddenly she realised that someone was standing in front of her—the magician, waiting for a reward from her. She took off the magic ring she was wearing, and gave it to him. "Take this as a birthday gift from me," she told him. "Give it to your daughter. It has some magical powers. As long as she wears it, she'll remain beautiful. Her ugliness will only be seen to her, that too if she were to look into a mirror." The princess then hurriedly left the place for her chambers, while her parents wondered what prompted her to part with a gift given to her by the heavenly damsel.

The vampire concluded his narration there and turned to King Vikramaditya. "O King! The princess was ugly-looking, and she was fully



aware of it. She was herself sad about it and knew that her ugly looks were bothering her parents, too. She did not seek a solution for the problem and was, therefore, happy when she got the gift of a magic ring from Chandramukhi. She was confident that with her newly acquired beauty, she could marry any prince she cared to and thus make her parents, too, happy. Still she did not have any hesitation to part with such a ring blessed with powers to make her a beauty. Why then did she take such a sudden decision? Was she so much fed up with life? If you know the answer, and yet care not to answer me, you'd better be forewarned! Your head will be blown to a thousand pieces!"

The king had a ready answer for the vampire. "It's true the ring had some unique powers. But they had certain limitations. Even when the princess wore it, she really remained ugly, and she could see this whenever

she looked into the mirror. Her beauty could be seen only by others. Moreover, she was forbade from visiting temples when she wore the ring. She did not wish to parade in borrowed beauty and hoodwink her suitors or whoever became her husband ultimately, because some day, the truth would be out. There would be occasions when she and her husband would visit temples together. Then, how was she different from the simple-looking daughter of the magician? She at least had some good features, though she was of a dark complexion. The princess thought the magic ring would be more useful to the girl, while she being a princess with a claim to the throne would any day get a prince to marry her. So, the princess parted with the ring in all sincerity."

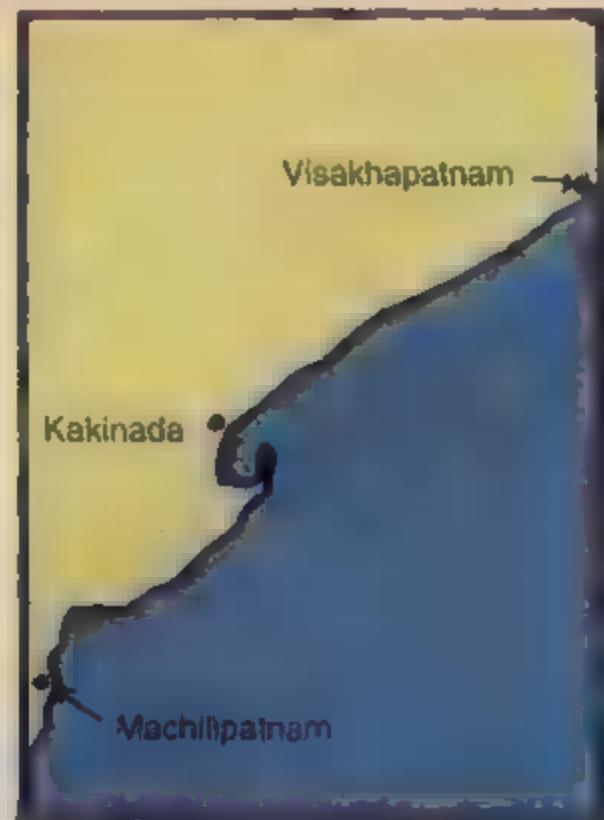
The vampire realised that he had been outsmarted by the king. He flew back to the ancient tree, carrying the corpse with him. Vikramaditya drew his sword and went after the vampire.



Coastal Journeys -20

Along The Andhra Coast

Story : Meera Nair ♦ Artist : K.S. Gopakumar



Northeast of Machilipatnam lies the delta formed by the river **Godavari**, the longest river in the south and often referred to as the **Dakshina Ganga**. The French-speaking town of **Yanam** is situated at the northeastern end of this delta.

Yanam is a small town barely 34sq km in area. It was a French possession for a long time and now is part of the Union Territory of Pondicherry.

Further north is the coastal village of **Sarpapuram**, the town of snakes. The **Bhavanarayanswami** temple here is well-known.

According to legend, the mother of Anantha, the king of snakes, was once so angry with the snakes that she uttered a terrible curse. As a result, all of them perished in a sacrificial fire. Anantha was away on a pilgrimage at the time. He was extremely distressed to hear about what had happened when he returned. He prayed to Lord Vishnu and practised severe penance so that his snakes would be restored to life. Vishnu appeared to him in answer to his prayers and the Lord looked exactly as Anantha had imagined him to be. Later when he built a temple at the spot, the idol was made to resemble this form of Vishnu and the temple came to be known as **Bhavanarayanaswamy**, meaning the 'thought form' of Vishnu.

At Kakinada's fishing harbour



A few kilometres further north takes us to **Kakinada**. A minor port, it exports cotton, groundnuts, sugar and tobacco. In 1923, a historic session of the Indian National Congress took place here under the presidentship of Maulana Mohammed Ali, the first Khilafat leader.

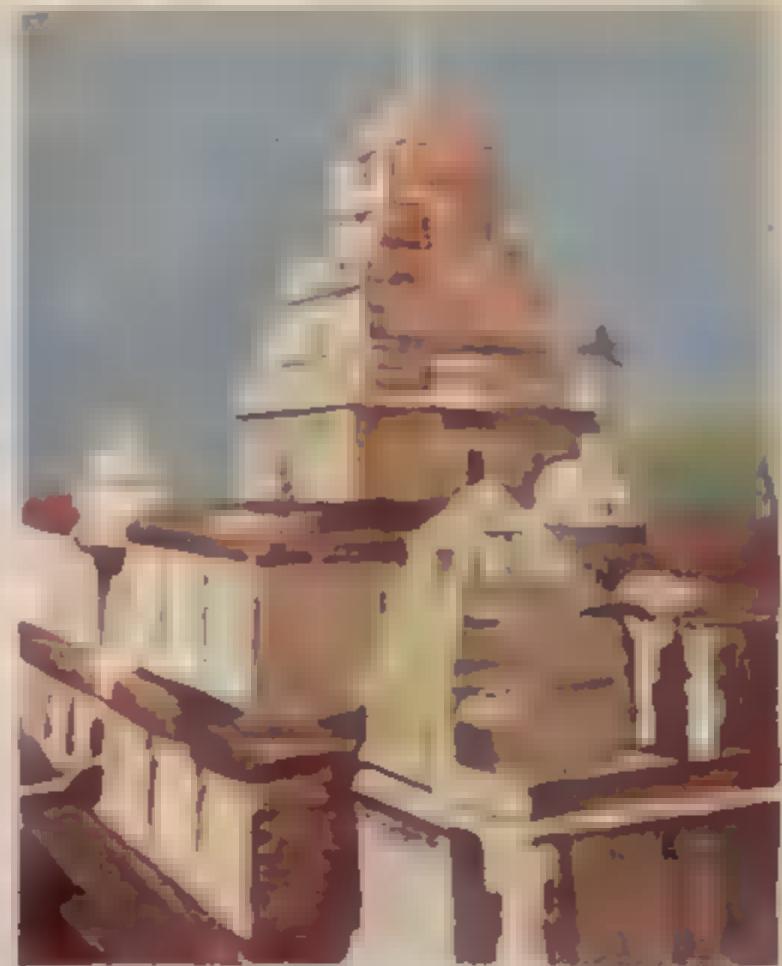
Draksharama is a coastal town 17km from Kakinada. Its name is believed to be ■ corrupted form of *Daksha Arama* or the garden of Dakshaprajapati, site of a famous *yagna*.

According to legend, Dakshaprajapati's daughter Dakshayani got married to Siva much against her father's wishes. When Dakshaprajapati performed his grand *yagna* he deliberately did not invite Siva. But Dakshayani was keen on attending her father's *yagna* and so she went there alone. Not only was she

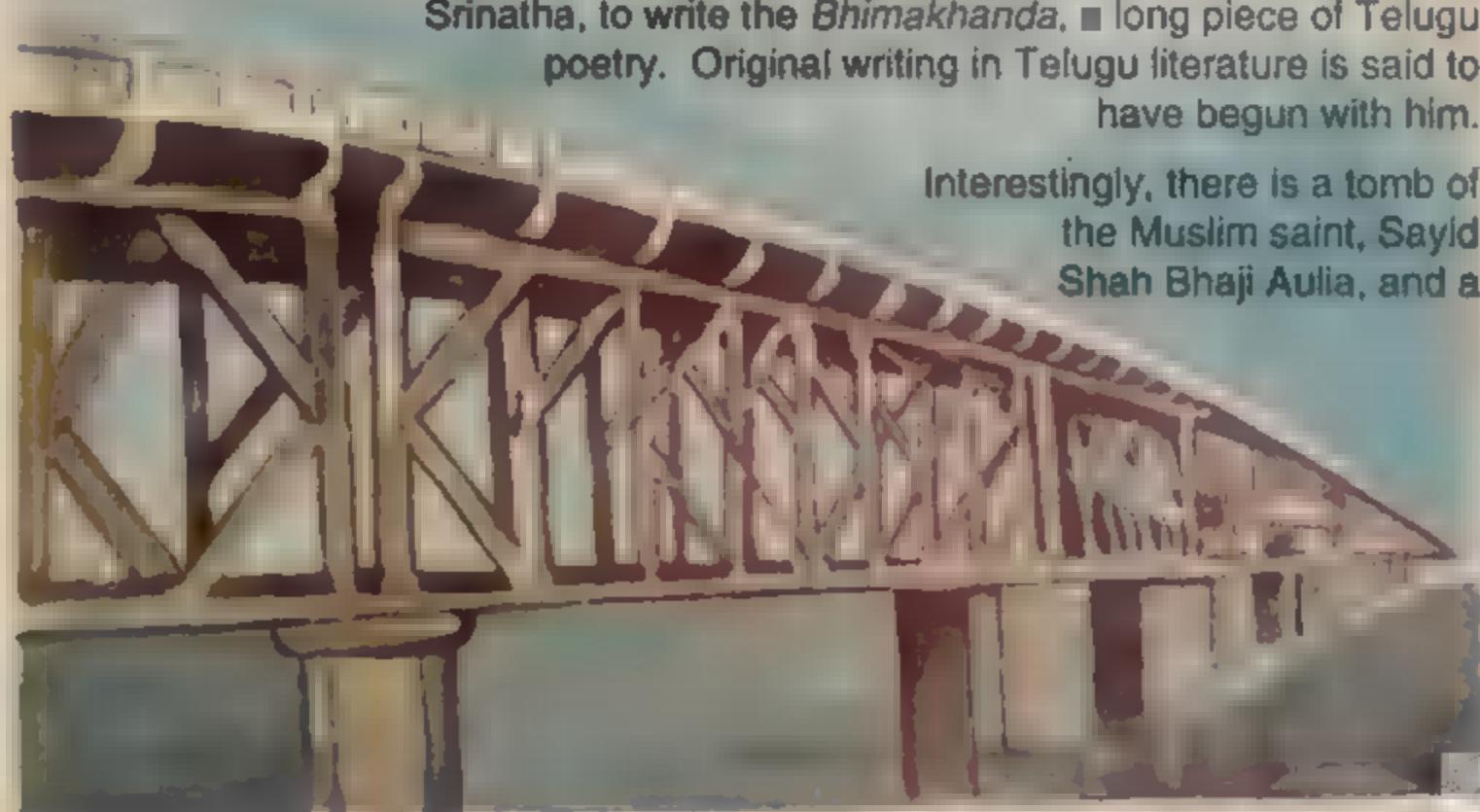
ignored by her father but she also had to suffer insults flung ■ her and her husband even though he was not present. Thoroughly humiliated she threw herself into the *yagna* fire. When Siva heard this, he ■ so furious that he began to sweat profusely. Out of this sweat was born the ferocious monster, Veerabhadra, who avenged his master by killing Dakshaprajapati.

The Draksharama temple is said to have inspired the 14th century poet, Srinatha, to write the *Bhimakhanda*, ■ long piece of Telugu poetry. Original writing in Telugu literature is said to have begun with him.

Interestingly, there is a tomb of the Muslim saint, Sayid Shah Bhaji Aulia, and a



The Draksharama Temple



The Railroad bridge, Rajahmundry

mosque in the compound of the Siva temple here.

Rajahmundry (Rajamahendravaram) is located on the banks of the Godavari, west of Kakinada. It is noted for its carpets and sandalwood products. The 56-span long bridge here is the second largest in India. Rajahmundry is also associated with poet Nannaya, who wrote the first Telugu classic, the *Andhra Mahabharatamu*.

Our journey along the coastal road takes us to **Visakhapatnam**, the biggest and the deepest port between Rotterdam in the West and Tokyo in the East. Visakhapatnam was named after Vaisakha, the God of Valour, whose temple once stood by the shore. It used to be a small fishing village till the British transformed it into a seaport. Today, Visakhapatnam is a bustling, industrial city with the largest ship-building yard in the country - the Hindustan Shipyard Ltd., established in 1952.

The city's famous landmark is the **Dolphin's Nose**, a 358m high rock that juts into the sea. It resembles a dolphin's nose. On top of this huge rock is a lighthouse, whose beam can be seen 65km out at sea. It is the country's most powerful lighthouse.

Waltair, often referred to as Visakhapatnam's twin town, is barely three kilometres away. Its pleasant climate has made it a health resort. The three best known beaches of Visakhapatnam, the Ramakrishna Mission Beach, the Rishikonda Beach and Lawson's Bay, are idyllic beaches with vast stretches of golden sand.

Simhachalam or the Hill of the Lion stands barely 16km west of Visakhapatnam. A temple dedicated to Lord Narasimha or Vishnu was built on top of the hill in the 11th century.



Visakhapatnam's ship-building Yard

The Dolphin's Nose



According to the Puranas, Hiranyakasipu, the king of the Rakshasas was angry with his son, Prahlad, for worshipping Vishnu. Though he tried various ways to make his son stop worshipping Vishnu, he did not succeed. In exasperation, he threw Prahlad into the sea and then placed the Simhachalam hill over his head in order to crush him completely. Vishnu was furious. Taking the form of Narasimha (half man and half lion) he came to Prahlad's rescue. He stood by the side of the hill and tilted it up so that Prahlad could escape. He then went in pursuit of Hiranyakasipu. But even after killing him his anger would not subside and it was only when Lord Siva disguised as the bird 'Sarabha' pacified him that he calmed down.

To appease the fury of the lord, the idol of Narasimha inside the temple is covered with thick layers of sandalwood paste. The sandalwood coating is removed only once a year during the Chandanyatra festival around April-May, when people from all over the country visit the shrine to have a 'darshan' of the Lord.

Lawson's Bay



TOMMY GOES SHOPPING



It was a happy sunny day. The stout little Tommy, his mother's only child, blissfully lay under the spreading branches of the fig tree. His hat was over his eyes, hands under his head, one leg over the other bent leg, but his mouth was wide open. *Plomp!* A red ripe fig landed right on his tongue and he let it go down slowly with great relish, then reopened his mouth. A second fig did fall after a while, and bouncing off his nose rolled onto the ground. But he kept perfectly still and only said, "Dear Mr. Fig, why so wide off mark?" Then he

continued to wait with his open mouth. No wonder, Tommy was known in his wee hamlet as the lazy little loafer.

One day his mother who, of course, never viewed her son as others did, came looking for him in his favourite haunt, the fig tree which stood near the fence of their garden.

"There, my sweet, sweet boy, will you get up?" she startled him from his slumber.

"What's wrong, Mama?" he asked rubbing his eyes and stretching his arms lazily.

"Now, a good boy that you are,

will you hurry to the market and fetch half a dozen crabs and some salt? Mind you, don't play on the way but come back straight home," instructed his mother loud and clear, handing him a bag and some money.

"Yes, mother, your bidding will be done in the twinkle of an eye!" said Tommy very obediently.

He then folded up his trousers in order to walk faster, put on his hat and marched off. On reaching the market he went straight to the woman selling crabs. Picking up a stick he began to poke at them.

"Hey you, naughty fellow! What are you up to?" shouted the old woman.

"Granny dear, I was just seeing whether your crabs are really alive? Will you please give me six big fat crawling ones?" requested the boy in

a kindly tone.

"Okay, here they are and I give you one absolutely free, for you do look like a nice little gentleman," said the vendor with a smile.

Tommy tied the seven crabs together and went to the grocer. "Good morning, Mr. Grocer! Do you have salt that tastes really salty? Then please give me this bagful of it," he said, handing over the bag and the money to the man on the counter.

"Here you are, Master Tommy! A bagful of salt that's as salty as salt!" said the man, amused by the boy's plain talk.

So with the crabs and the bag of salt, Tommy the lazy little loafer started back home. As he went, he sang joyously at the top of his voice.

*Tommy, the lazy little loafer,
Is a king now and no pauper.*



He has seven walking crabs and a bag of salt.

His mother's biddings he has done without a fault!

Just as he was passing by the lake, he heard his friends calling him. "Tommy, isn't it a fine day to have some fun? Come, let's play!"

The proposal was rather tempting. But Tommy must carry out his mother's orders too! He hesitated. But the friends coaxed him and he finally gave in.

"All right, I think some break will do me good after this day's hard work," he consoled himself.

Then, placing the crabs on the ground, he said in an authoritative tone. "Look here, you seven little fellows. Since you can very well crawl and walk, why should I take the trouble of carrying you all the way? Now, pay

attention to me. Proceed straight on this path for a furlong and soon you will come to a big fig tree beside a fence. There a right turn will lead you to a small gate. Just walk in without any fear and Mother will welcome you with a smile and make you the tastiest crabs of the season! Okay?"

The little crabs did give the boy the impression that they understood every word of his.

Now what to do with the bag of salt? "The safest place is to hide it under the water. Surely, no one is going to find it there!" Tommy told himself and sank the bag of salt at the shallow end of the lake.

Then he joined his friends in hopping and skipping, singing and dancing, and frolicking to their heart's content. Only when the sun had begun to set over the hills did Tommy



remember that he had to get back home.

His mother stood by the fig tree anxiety writ large on her face.

"Now, what's up, you naughty boy? Where are the things you were asked to fetch?" she asked furiously.

"Dear Mama, naughty is the one who stole the salt!" replied the boy.

"What do you mean? The salt, of all the things, was stolen?" yelled the angry mother.

"Well," explained Tommy, "I had hid it in the safest place possible, under the water, while I played with my friends on the lakeside. Alas, when I went to pick it up, it had completely disappeared from the bag! Do you think the fish might have made a feast of it? But it was as salty as salt could

be!"

"O you fool! Now, what do you have to say about the crabs?" demanded the mother in desperation.

"Why? Didn't they come home? Well, they walked reasonably fast and I did explain to them the directions to our house very clearly! There were seven of them, for the good old woman gave me one extra as she found me to be a smart little gentleman!"

Tommy's mother silently went into her house and closed the door behind her.

Tommy continued to wonder, 'What, alas, had really gone wrong? How could the salt just vanish? Where could those smart little crabs have gone?'

- Retold by Anup Kishore Das





1. ...white cliffs made of remains of tiny marine animals?

Their chalky skeletons settled down on the sea-bed, piling one above the other and in course of time they hardened into rocks and were pushed up to the surface by Earth's movements.



14 Where in the World Would You Find...

2. ...a granary that resembles a stupa?

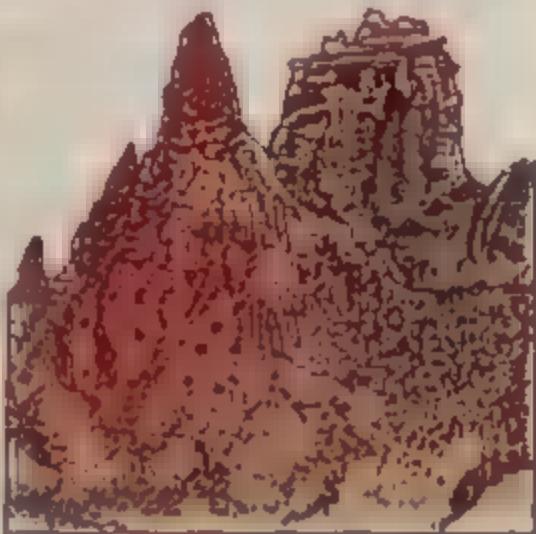
This granary is located in India. Its door opens only inwards and hence cannot



be opened when full. It was built by the East India Company in the 17th century when ■ famine devastated this place.

3. ...the tallest statue in the world?

It is a gargantuan figure of a woman with ■ sword clutched in one outstretched hand. The statue is 82m high.



4. ...people living in cone-hills formed by ■ erupted volcano?

The cone-hills, that formed a million years ago when the volcano erupted, resemble multistoreyed cities. Caves dug out of the soft volcanic rocks serve as houses. There ■ frescoed churches and monasteries where the altars, tables and chairs are also made of volcanic rock.

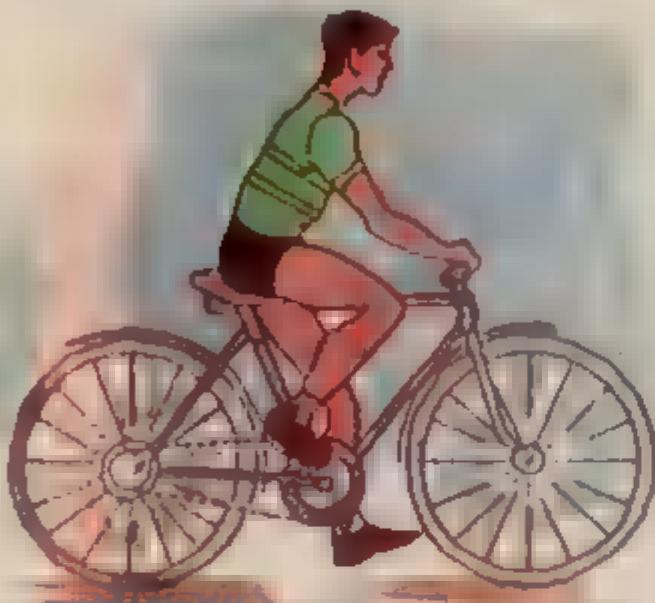
5. ...the largest national park?

This park is home to at least 400 species of birds, 150 species mammals, 50 species of fish, 40 types of frog and 34 kinds of snakes. Around 7000 elephants, 1500 lions, 900 leopards and 250 cheetahs wander about in an area of about 19,455 sq.km.



PICTURE TRAP

1. This is a profile of a pretty girl but there's another face concealed in it. Can you spot it?



2. The cyclist is driving at break-neck speed but the artist has made a mistake while drawing the picture. Can you point it out?



STORY TRAP

The Emperor's Generosity

THE Emperor Ashoka, grandson of Chandragupta Maurya, was walking through an orchard when he was struck by a stone. His bodyguards seized the person who had thrown the stone — a thin, wild-eyed woman. "Forgive me, your Majesty," cried the woman. "I was trying to knock down some guavas from that tree for my children. They're hungry from morning. The stone missed the



tree and hit you instead."

"Give her a hundred silver coins," said Ashoka to his minister.

"But Your Majesty," said the minister, "she threw a stone at you. She should be punished, not rewarded."

"If she had hit the guava tree it would have given her fruits," said the emperor. "Shouldn't the king be more generous than a guava tree?"

Answer

Guavas did not grow in India at the time of Ashoka the Great. The fruit was introduced into India by Europeans.



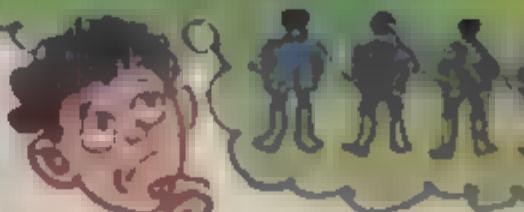
MIND BENDERS



1. Position 12 children that they form four rows with four children in each row.



2. If while standing with your foot and left shoulder pressed against a wall, you asked to lift your right foot, will you able to do it?



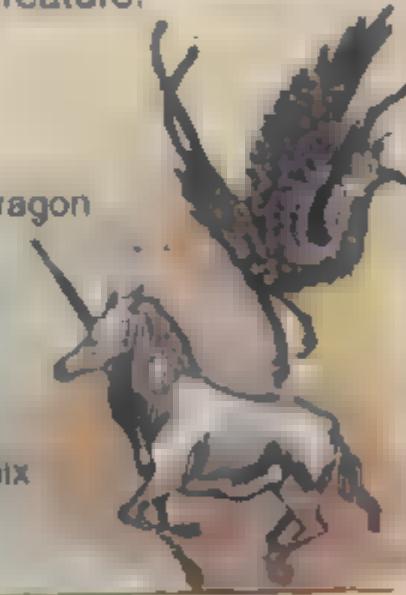
3. The names of these mythical creatures have got mixed up. Give the correct to each creature.



a) Unicom



b) Basilisk



c) Dragon

d) Phoenix

4. There are 5 caps, two red and three black. Three friends, Mohan, Raman and Vinay are wearing three of the caps. The other two caps are out of sight.

Ramani is seated in such a position that he can see Vinay and Mohan while Vinay can see only Mohan and Ramani. However, they can hear each other. colour of his cap he says he does not know the colour of his cap either but when he realises that his own cap must be black, what is the conclusion?



that he [] see Vinay and Mohan while Vinay can see only Mohan and Mohan cannot see either of them. However, they can hear each other. When Raman is asked to tell the colour of his cap he says he doesn't know. Vinay does not know the colour of his cap either but when he hears Raman's reply he immediately realises that his own [] must be black. How does he arrive at that conclusion?

Let's draw it

From 'P' to Owl

YOU can transform the letter P into a picture of a sleepy owl in three easy steps. Here's how:



Answers to Golden Hour No. 13

WHERE ■ THE WORLD

1. Lascaux, southwestern France
2. Chittorgarh, Rajasthan
3. Northern Tanzania, Africa (Mt. Kilimanjaro)
4. Myanmar (Burma)
5. Washington D.C., USA

PICTURE TRAP

There are ■ tigers in Africa.

PICTURE QUIZ

1. Saudi Arabia
2. China
3. Egypt
4. Germany
5. Bolivia
6. Zimbabwe
7. Spain
8. Myanmar
9. Madagascar

MIND BENDERS

1. 50 paise and 5 paise. One of the coins is not a 50 paise coin but the other one is!
2. The parrot was deaf.
3. There are six members in the family.
4. Greenland. It may not have been discovered, but it was there!
5. Two friends at the same time. Then it will cost you the price of three tickets. If you took ■ friend twice you would have to buy not only his but your ticket too, twice.
6. Give the last girl the box containing the apple.
7. Liar. He could not have overheard such a conversation. A Liar would not tell the truth by admitting she was ■ Liar and a Truth-teller would not claim to be a liar.
8. The ■ with the biggest feet.

SPORTS SNIPPETS

Smash Tennis

Ever heard of some of world's professional tennis stars playing against children? That is what happened in Chennai (Madras) in the first week of April. Players like Fernon Wibier of Netherlands, Gabor Koves (Hungary), Lars Burgsmuller (Germany), Magnus Norman (Sweden), Orlin Stanoytchev (Bulgaria), and Tamer El Sawy (Egypt) were in Chennai to participate in the Gold Flake Open Tennis. They took on hundreds of children, aged 3 and above, who played with low compression balls and junior size racquets. They did not stop with playing tennis. The professionals answered their questions and posed for photographs. Popular cartoon (comics) characters, Tom and Jerry, and others were at hand to add to the merriment. The event named 'Smash Tennis' is aimed at promoting tennis among children.

Autographed shoes at auction

A pair of tennis shoes autographed by last year's Wimbledon champion Richard Krajicek; ■ T-shirt carrying the signatures of currently World Number One Martina Hingis, Jennifer Capriati, Carlos Moya, and Tim Henman; two copies of the 'swim suit edition' of ■ sports magazine signed by Steffi Graf; a tennis blouse signed by Olympic gold medallist Lindsay Davenport; and

a pair of tennis shoes signed by Monica Seles were some of the 'tennis memorabilia' put up for sale at an auction held in — where else? — Chennai! As these priceless items were not available anywhere else in the world, they were all grabbed by tennis fans who had converged at Chennai to watch the Gold Flake Open. The proceeds were handed to a charity organisation in Chennai which takes care of mentally disturbed women. According to the tournament director, these world renowned players readily agreed to donate the items when they were told about the organisation and its service activities.

Man vs. Machine

It is said of world No.2 International Grandmaster Viswanathan Anand that when he was younger, he did not take more than 30 minutes for each game of chess. Little wonder, then, that he was nicknamed 'lightning kid'! And it is common knowledge how quick computers are in making calculations. Yet, the other day he beat a battery of six computers 4-2. He was not alone. Grandmaster Jan Timman of



Netherlands also faced the same computers, but he lost 2-4. Each of them played six games, three each with white and black pieces. The tables with the computers were placed in a circle and the players went round making their moves briskly. They were given only 30 seconds for each move. And they found that the machines were taking their own time! By the way, the computers had some exciting names - HIARCS, GENIUS, FRITZ 4, REBEL, KALLISTO, and DEEP BLUE.

Million plus for Maradonna

The football wizard, Diego Maradonna, has signed up with the Bocco Juniors of Argentina. For every match he plays for the club, he will be paid an equivalent of Rs. 17.5 lakhs. He is right now under the strict



surveillance of his doctor, following his hospitalisation for blood pressure. He was taking part in a talk show in Chile, when he collapsed and was rushed to hospital. He has been advised to avoid any tension of any kind.

The golden boy of golf

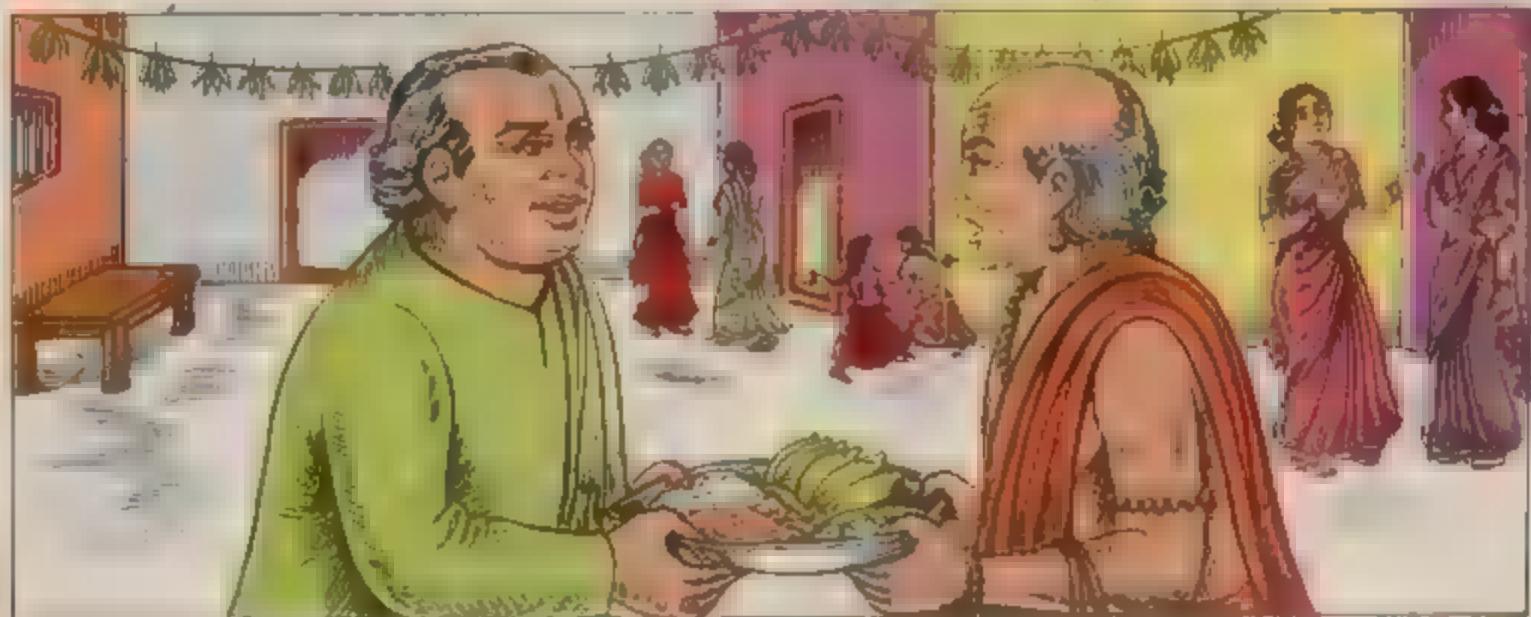
This new find is called Tiger Woods. He is 21 years old, and is of African-American descent. He was playing in the 61st Masters at Augusta in Georgia,

U.S.A., which is the first major championship of 1997. His 12-stroke victory over Tom Kite is a Masters record by 3 strokes; it is also the greatest winning margin in any major tournament since Tom Morris Sr. won in the British Open in 1862 by 13 strokes. The world seems to have discovered one of the toughest players in golf which is generally considered the preserve of the privileged and 'white'. Woods is the first African-American, and the youngest, to win the U.S. Master's title. When Seve Ballesteros of Spain set the standard in 1980, he was only 23. Golf fans do not rule out the possibility of Woods accomplishing the Slam in golf by winning the U.S. Open, the British Open, and PGA Championship—a feat not achieved by anyone till now.

Hunger-strike against ban

Don't be surprised if you see women referees on the football field. There are quite a few, making their mark in Europe and South America. But 25-year-old Florencia Romano is out to create history in a different way. She went on a hunger-strike. Reason: she was not permitted to act as referee in the First Division Football League of Argentina. In an interview to the daily "All Sports", she claimed that she has all the qualifications and experience to act as referee in major tournaments, but she has been denied the chance just because she is a woman! "Till I can blow the whistle or till I die, I shall deny myself any food!" she threatened the Argentine Football Association (AAF).

GOOD ACT BEGETS ANOTHER GOOD ACT



Sivaram of Shulgiri was an honest, straightforward person. He could not tolerate if anyone tried to cheat another person. He would take the first opportunity to teach him a lesson.

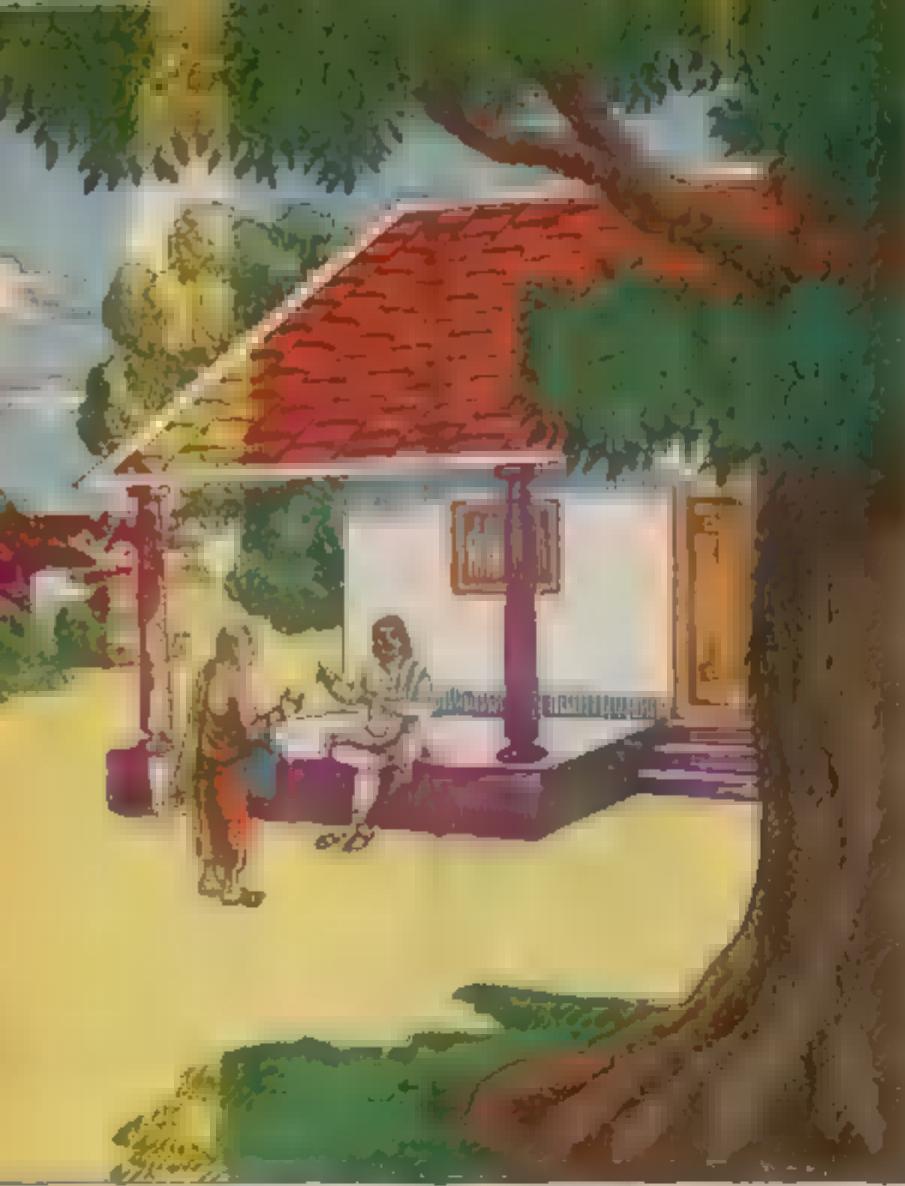
The temple in Shulgiri had a priest called Sadachari. He was once invited by Manikumar of the same place to perform a puja at his residence. After the puja, Sadachari waited for his *dakshina*. Manikumar placed a quarter rupee coin on a betel leaf and handed it to the *pujari*. "What's this, Manikumar?" asked the priest, surprised. "I was expecting at least a hundred rupees. The puja was quite elaborate, and I had really taken pains. I hope you would realise that and compensate me properly, commensurate with your status."

"Swami, I didn't want to break a

tradition," Manikumar tried to explain. "I've seen my father and grandfather giving only four annas to *pujaris*. I just followed that tradition."

Sadachari was very disappointed. He realised that Manikumar would not revise his stand. He took the quarter rupee with great reluctance and went away. He had not gone far when he met Sivaram on the way. He enquired after the *pujari* and his family. During their conversation, Sadachari happened to mention about the puja at Manikumar's house and how mean the gentleman was in paying *dakshina*, and his explanation for his action.

Sivaram was angry with Manikumar. "Did he say that he was following tradition? I am told that he is making a lot of money on grocery.



I wonder whether he is selling all the different items at the old rates, or whether he hasn't raised the prices recently. I've no doubt he must be selling them at higher rates." He then thought for a while and added, "Don't worry, he must be taught a lesson. What was once quarter-of-an-anna is now worth five rupees. We must collect that much amount from him. I shall tell you how." He then whispered something into the priest's ear.

The next day, Sadachari visited Manikumar's grocery shop. He bought a measure of rice and gave him a quarter of a rupee. "What's this, pujari?" asked Manikumar angrily. "Four annas for a measure of rice?"

"I'm a firm believer in tradition!"

said Sadachari, without batting an eyelid. "You remember what you told me when you gave me my dakshina yesterday. My father and my grandfather used to pay only four annas for a full measure of rice. I didn't wish to break that tradition!"

Manikumar felt ashamed of himself. He stood crestfallen, with a guilty conscience. All those who heard of the incident praised Sivaram for the way he taught Manikumar a lesson. But he would tell them all, "Honestly, I don't fully approve of the method myself. Tit for tat is not good."

"You may be right, sir," some of his friends remarked, "but we've to admit that your method was very effective."

One day, Meenakshi came to Shivgiri along with her two daughters. After she became a widow, she and her children had been staying with her brother and family. He did not have any objection to their presence, but his wife was not very happy. At first her protests were in muffled voices, but as days went by, her barbs against her sister-in-law and daughters became louder and louder. "Is this a choultry or what? People seem to enjoy free food and free lodging! And who's there to cook for all of them? Poor me! I've to do all the dirty job, and someone else has to meet all the expenditure!"

Meenakshi could not bear such insulting remarks for long. She decided to go away from her brother's

place. That was how she and her daughters reached Shavigiri, where she rented a house. She started a mess in her house, which soon became popular. Many people came to eat the delicacies she prepared.

Not far away from her place Somayya was running a hotel. He suddenly found that people had stopped patronising his place and were flocking to Meenakshi's mess. He could not think of any means to bring back his customers again. The only way was to create trouble at Meenakshi's place. He took the help of two of his friends. They went to Meenakshi's mess the next day and sat for food. Half-way through, one of them got up holding a dead cockroach between his fingers as if he had picked it up from the food served to him. "See this! A cockroach! I never knew the lady here cooks non-vegetarian food! And a cockroach at that!" He threw it into a corner and began moving out.

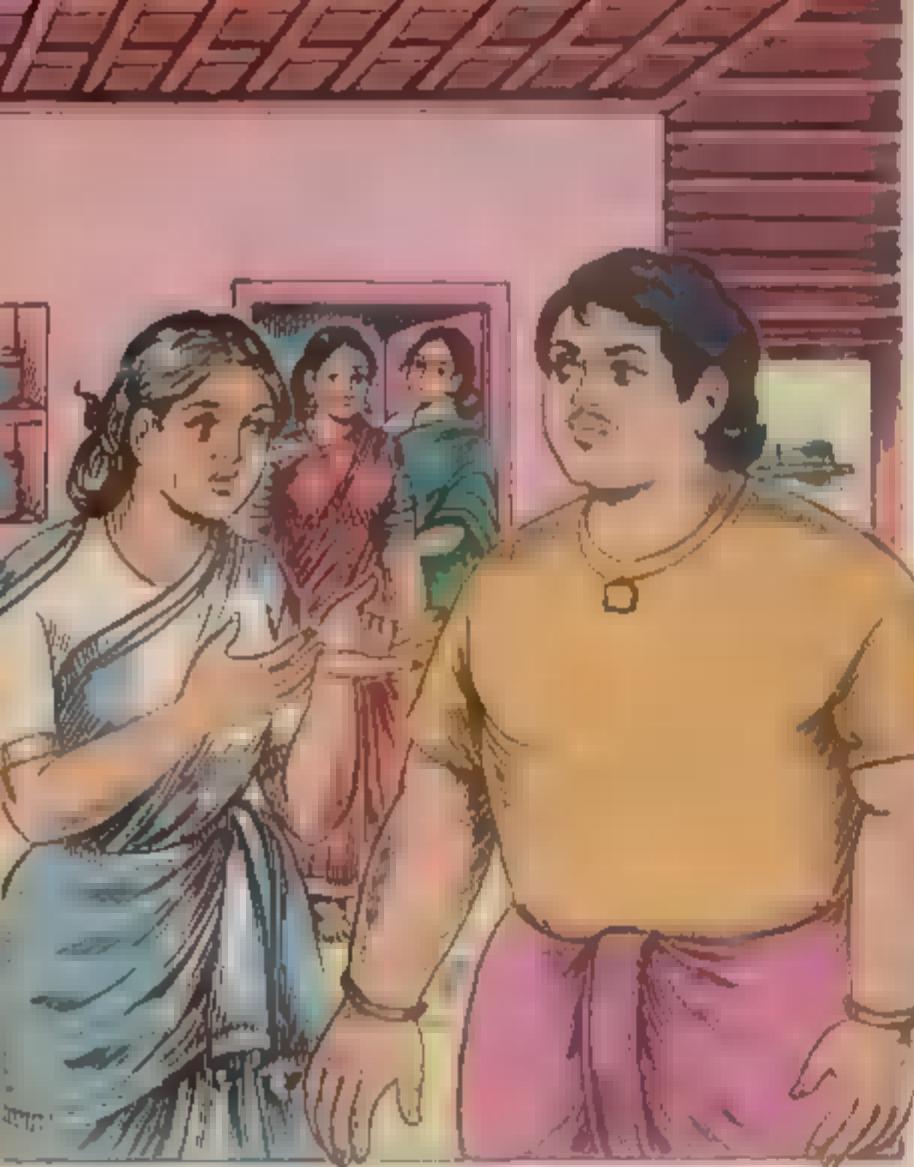
It was then that the other man too got up. He had a dead lizard between his fingers. "Ah! Here I get a lizard! Hey, lady! What other things have you cooked today? A scorpion? Or a frog?" He also left the room and joined his friend outside, where he seemed to have already collected a crowd. They were shouting and gesticulating at Meenakshi who had by then come to the porch. Her words were drowned in the cacophony that came from the

crowd. The one whose voice was heard louder than that of others was none other than hotelier Somayya.

After the crowd had melted, there was still one person remaining there, Sivaram. Meenakshi knew that he was a respectable gentleman of the place. So, she told him how she and her daughters were very careful in cleaning everything before they cooked the food. She assured him that at no time before that day had anybody complained about the food they served.

Sivaram listened to Meenakshi and almost came to the conclusion that somebody had made a deliberate attempt to malign Meenakshi. Who could that be? He thought for a long time. "I'm convinced that you cannot be blamed for whatever has happened today, Meenakshi," said Sivaram. "I'm wondering who would be interested in doing such mischief. I've a doubt whether it's not the handiwork of Somayya. Of course, everybody knows that ever since you started your mess, his hotel was losing its patronage, and his customers were coming to your place. Anyway, don't worry. We must teach him a lesson. I shall send Buddhu here; he's a tough guy. You give him food every day; see that he gets a sumptuous meal."

Sivaram gave instructions to Buddhu before he sent him to Meenakshi's mess. He kept a close watch on the people who came there



to eat. He watched all their movements while they ate and also when they came in and went out. Nothing happened for a few days. Then, one day, he saw a customer opening a paper packet stealthily. He was about to drop a dead cockroach into the food when Buddhu caught hold of his hands. "Hey, mister, what're you trying to do?" he shouted at him.

One or two others had by then got up and moved up to the customer, who still had the packet in his hand. Buddhu continued: "Tell me, who has sent you all to do this mischief here? Out with the name! Otherwise, I shall beat you black and blue!" He caught hold of their neck in a threatening posture.

By then, all the other customers also had got up from their seats. They told Buddhu. "They're not regulars here; we're never seen them. They must be punished!"

The mischief-makers realised that their game was up. They would better tell the truth. "Leave us alone!" they pleaded with Buddhu who had begun to twist their arms. "It's all the doing of that Somayya!"

Now Meenakshi took over. "One of you please run up to Sivaram and request him to come here. You must also get hold of Somayya."

By the time he arrived, Sivaram was already present. Before he said anything, Somayya fell at his feet and apologised for his behaviour. "Sir, you know how my business fared and failed ever since this lady opened her mess. I was very perturbed. I was afraid I might have to close my hotel if I didn't prevent people from patronising her. I couldn't think of any other method to do so. And I was not aware that you had instructed Buddhu to keep a watch for my accomplices." He then turned to the crowd. "I seek pardon from all of you!" He now fell at the feet of Meenakshi.

"Somayya, who are we to pardon anybody if they decide to commit crimes and play mischief?" said Sivaram. "There's somebody above all of us. He alone is competent to grant pardon. You must remember

something, Somayya. If you don't harm others, you can lead a life of peace and happiness. But if you go about harming others and creating problems for them, then you'll have to suffer the consequences."

"Sir, what you say is hundred per cent correct," admitted Somayya. "Anyway, one thing is certain. I won't be able to run a hotel here any more, because people will look at me only with suspicion. I'm afraid I may have to leave the place and go somewhere else. But, then, where do I go? Sir, you yourself have to solve this problem for me!" He pleaded pitifully.

Sivaram looked at the face of each person in the crowd, as if he expected some suggestions from them. But none came. "All right, listen to me carefully, all of you. I had another purpose in sending Buddhu to Meenakshi's place. If he earned her gratitude and affection, then I wanted to suggest that she gave her elder daughter in marriage to him. And if

Somayya repents his act and promises to reform himself, I also wish to suggest that his son married Meenakshi's younger daughter. And he can join Meenakshi and run the mess together. Then there won't be any business rivalry between them. What do you say, Somayya? I hope you agree with my proposals, Meenakshi?"

Somayya almost jumped for joy. "That means I need not leave Shivgiri! Sir, I accept Meenakshi's daughter as my daughter-in-law. When shall we have the marriage?"

"The two marriages will take place on the same day," said Sivaram. "Come on, everybody, let's start preparations for the weddings; we must celebrate them as early as possible."

After the weddings, the two girls and their husbands decided to stay with the mother, helping her to run the mess, which was now ably managed by Somayya.



A WINDOW ON THE WORLD

MOSCOW - MINSK UNION

If everything goes well, on May 20 Russia and Belarus will be re-united – re-united, because the two nations had got separated five years ago when the Soviet Union broke up and each one of its 15 constituent republics attained independent status. Every one of them was initially joyous about its newly-acquired freedom. However, the break-up in 1991 soon saw the economy crumbling down in quite a few of the erstwhile republics. Long queues even for a single loaf of bread was a common sight, so much so, those states wondered whether the break-up was really a wise decision or it meant the disintegration of not only the Union but the republics themselves. A section of people began feeling that they were better off under the Communist rule of the Soviet Union. The question therefore was, would they advocate a re-unification?

Russia and Belarus, which literally means 'White Russia', have many things in common, like the mother-tongue of the people – Russian. While a republic, Belarus was known for its high educational standards and technological advancement, so much so those in charge of economic planning in the Soviet Union had encouraged the republic to set up industries in such important sectors as electronics, machine-building, food, and petrochemicals. The raw material for all these used to go from Russia. In view of

the strategic location of Belarus, Russia also used it as its gateway for its exports to European countries.

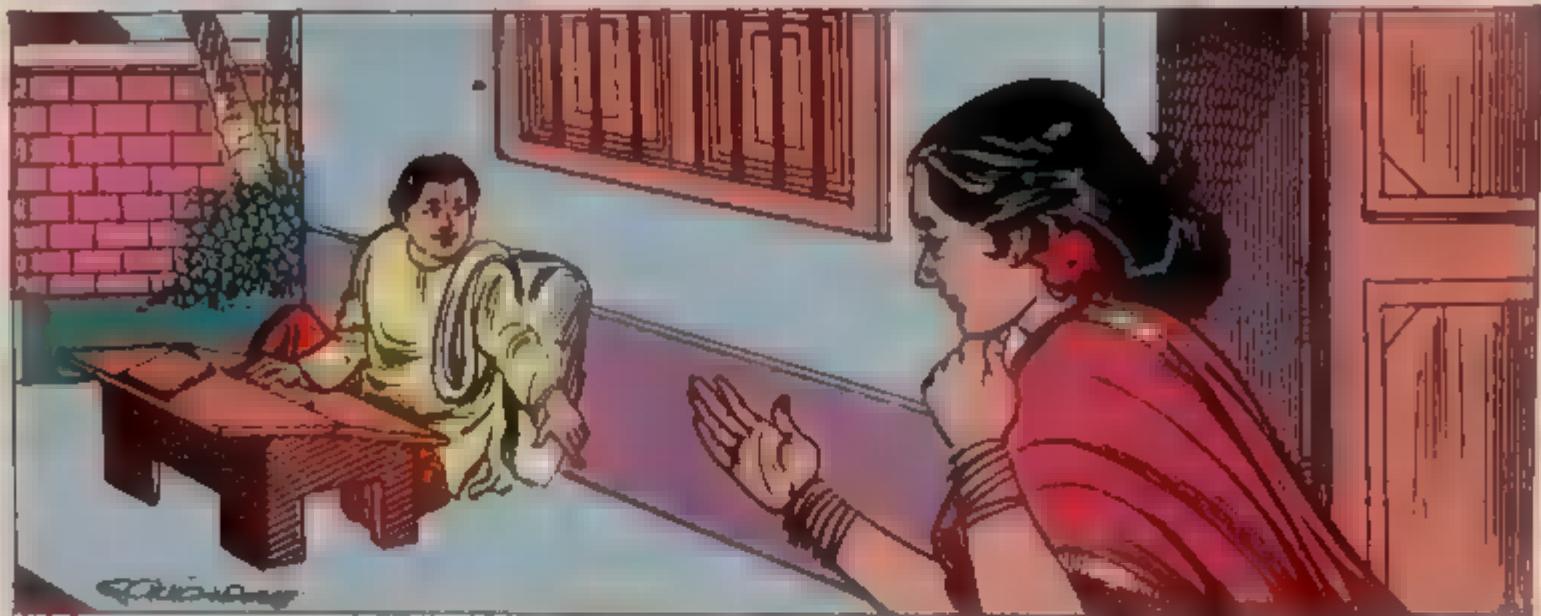
It was, therefore, natural that the two states soon contemplated a union. They first signed a re-integration accord in 1996, envisaging cooperation in different fields. On April 2 this year, they signed a Union Treaty to form a Federation. This is to be followed up with a Union Statute which President Yeltsin and President Lukashenko of Belarus will sign on May 20. It would be subsequently ratified by the parliaments of both states.

These moves were not without criticism. It was, however, pointed out that Russia stands to gain much if it unites with Belarus, especially in the wake of reports of more European nations trying to join the NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation). In the Belarus capital of Minsk, there were protests against introduction of strict reforms on the Russian pattern to bring the economy on an even keel. But President Lukashenko went in for a referendum and got the voters' sanction for the union.

It is now to be seen whether other states too will wish to join this new Federation.



A DIFFERENT CALCULATION



Gajapati, an accountant, was one evening busy looking into account books and making calculations on a piece of paper. His wife approached him. "Look here, we've to be visiting our daughter," she reminded him. "You know she is expecting a baby. We must go and look her up tomorrow itself. But, mind you, we can't go empty-handed. We must carry some sweetmeat. Why not we order some sweets from Narayana's shop? You can send someone and fetch two or three boxes of sweets. Do you hear me?"

The accountant did not like to be disturbed, especially when he was busy doing some calculations. Now he would have to do all that exercise once again. But he did not curse his wife. It was true, a visit was due to

their daughter, he knew that. He did not want to raise any objection. "All right, all right, I shall attend to all that."

"Don't I know?" his wife taunted him. "You'll be quick to agree and quicker to forget that you had agreed!" She gave him some time to realise his habit. She was only speaking the truth. She moved closer to him, so that she need not raise her voice. "It's a question of our prestige, remember that. It's our duty to look her up every now and then, especially when she is about to become a mother. We must take a lot of sweetmeat. A lot, I repeat. Please send somebody even now!"

Gajapati saw Gopal go that way. He called him and told him something. Soon, Madhav came along, and he

whispered something to him as well. Then came Kumar. He was followed by Bhaskar. To each one of them he gave some instructions. His wife wondered, 'What's all this? Was there any necessity to send four persons to buy sweets? He could have spent just one person and with clear instructions!' Anyway she decided to await their return.

Half-an-hour went by; then one hour. Full three hours passed, still there was no sign of Gopal, Madhav, Kumar, or Bhaskar. She could not wait any longer. She went up to her husband once again. "It's getting late and none of the four persons you had sent to the shop has come back! When are they going to return? And when shall we pack the sweets to be taken tomorrow? Could it be that Narayana has run out of stock? Why don't you go and find out what has happened to them?"

"You're an idiot, Lakshmi!" Gajapati said, ridiculing her. "Have you

any idea what's the price of sweetmeat in Narayana's shop? Sixty rupees a pound! Too much! So, what I have done is, I've asked each one of them to go there, choose a different item, sample a piece, and say loudly that it is no good! That'll sure upset Narayana. He'll fear that he'll lose customers and his sweetmeat will remain unsold. Thus, he'll be forced to sell them off at a reduced rate. My men will then go back and buy, not one pound, but two pounds of each item at the reduced price! What do you say for that?" Gajapati flashed a mischievous smile.

Just as he had expected, all four of them turned up one after the other, carrying two packets each of **laddu**, **jalebi**, **badushahi**, and **son halwa**. They placed the packets in front of Gajapati.

His wife was beaming now. Wasn't he clever? thought Lakshmi of her husband, with pride.



NEWS FLASH

A different New Year

Hindus believe that the universe was created by Lord Brahma and that it has lived through the Krita Yuga, Tretha Yuga, and Dwapara Yuga, and it is passing through the Kali Yuga. It has been calculated that humanity has already spent 5,097 years in the fourth yuga, which will come to a close only in another nearly 432,000 years. Ever since the creation, the universe has spent ■ total of 1,955,885,097 years ! And it ■■■ a new year on April 8. In the officially recognised Vikram Era, its 2,054th year also started on that day. Six days later, it was New Year for Bengalis, Assamese, Tamils, and Keralites on April 14. These four first days do not generally coincide. This year they did.

A day of seclusion

The island of Bali in Indonesia has the Hindus forming the largest chunk of its population. They observed April 9 as a day of seclusion. And they observed it by switching off all lights, by not coming out of their houses to undertake any journey, and by avoiding any type of entertainment. Thus, the island, which attracts a lot of tourists otherwise, remained quiet for almost 18 to 20 hours. No motor vehicles plied on the roads that day, except those holding special permits.

A stamp in gold

On April 28, people of Indonesia remembered their First Lady Siti Hartinah, who passed away exactly ■ year ago. The Postal Department of that country issued a Commemorative Stamp in her honour. Only 30,000 stamps have been prepared; they are made of 25-carat gold and priced 112 dollars (nearly 4,000 Indian rupees) per stamp. The First Day Cover carries the signature of her husband, President Suharto.

Death did not part them

Chhedilal of Ayodhya and Mohammed Matin of nearby Faizabad were bosom friends for nearly 50 years. If they had been living in the same place, they would have surely been "inseparables". Mohammed fell ill and the news was conveyed to his friend in Ayodhya. Chhedilal rushed to Faizabad, only to be told that Matin had died a few hours earlier. The grief-stricken friend could not bear the sight of the dead body. He collapsed and died in the next couple of hours. Their funeral took place on the same day—April 12; Matin was buried and Chhedilal was cremated. People in the twin cities cite the incident as the finest example of Hindu-Muslim friendship.

A TRUE SON



An old woman once lived in a small hut. She would go to the nearby forest and collect broad leaves. She would stitch them together to make them large enough to serve food on. She would also gather dry grass and make them into broomsticks. All this she would sell in the nearby market. With the money thus earned she would buy foodstuff and vegetables and prepare food for herself and her grown-up son. An affectionate mother that she was, she saw to it that the youngster did not suffer from any want.

But the young man—Balu—would not raise his little finger to render any help to his mother. He refused to do any work. He would eat to his fill, and either sleep away his time or roam the streets. The old woman could not

tolerate his laziness any longer. One day, she burst out: "Balu, if you don't go for any work, then how're you going to live? I'm not saying you should work and earn for my sake. For your own sake, you should start working. Otherwise, you can't be staying here!"

Balu merely stared at her for some time. He then left the house in a huff. The old woman never expected that her son would react like that. At first she tried to forget the incident. Then she began to miss him. She was griefstricken.

One day, she managed to walk up to the forest. But she felt too tired to pluck leaves. She fainted and fell down. A young man called Somu came that way and saw the old woman lying unconscious. He splashed water

on her face and propped her up against a tree. A while later, she recovered and he managed to walk her to her hut.

"Who are you, young man?" she asked him affectionately. "I don't think I've seen you before."

"I'm an orphan, mother," he replied. "I had come out in search of work."

"Is that so?" said the old woman. "Then, you do one thing. You stay here till you can find work."

Somu liked the idea, and he stayed with the woman, helping her to pluck leaves and making brooms and selling them in the market.

One fine day, Balu returned home and was surprised to find his mother hale and happy. "Mother, I've changed my habits. I shall find a job, and we shall live comfortably. Whatever money you've saved, you may hand it to me. I hear there's someone staying with you these days. You may send him away."

The old woman did not say any-

thing. When Balu went out sometime later, she dug a pit and hid all the money she had saved. Then she threw all the items inside the house here and there, and then called out, "Help! I've been robbed! The thief has taken away all my savings!"

Balu was the first to return. "I told you to hand over the money to me! Now everything has been taken away by the thief. So, why should I remain here? I'm going my way," he shouted at his mother and went away.

Sometime later, Somu came. He, too, saw the place in disarray and then helped the woman in keeping everything in order. "Don't worry, mother. I shall work and replace all that had been lost."

The woman smiled. "Nothing has been lost, my son. I hid all the money, so that Balu won't take it away. When he knew that I didn't have any money, he deserted me. Would I call him my son? No. You're my true son as you have promised to take care of me."



UPS AND DOWNS IN LIFE



Parasmull was a cloth merchant of Alkapuri. His wife was Anandi. They had a son who was strong-built, and a daughter who was good-looking. She was given in marriage to the son of Nanjappa, the grain merchant of the neighbouring village.

After they had seen off the girl to her husband's village, Parasmull told his son, "Madan, I must now take some rest. So, henceforth, you look after the business." He gave him all the instructions and remained with him in the shop for one or two days and then decided to stay back at home. The son now took over the shop completely and everything went smooth. News also came that the young bride was happy in her new home.

By all accounts, Parasmull should

have led a quiet, contented life. On the contrary, he shut himself up in his bedroom, reluctant to meet people, and coming out only to eat food. The rest of the time he lay in bed, sometimes sleeping, other times just staring at the ceiling. Slowly, he began rejecting food and spending sleepless nights. He was not speaking even to his wife, unless it was absolutely necessary.

Anandi was upset at first, but hoped that things would change. Then she was perturbed. She informed their friends. They brought in doctors who could not diagnose what exactly was wrong with Parasmull. Neither medicines nor mantras could help Parasmull to come out of his state of mind.

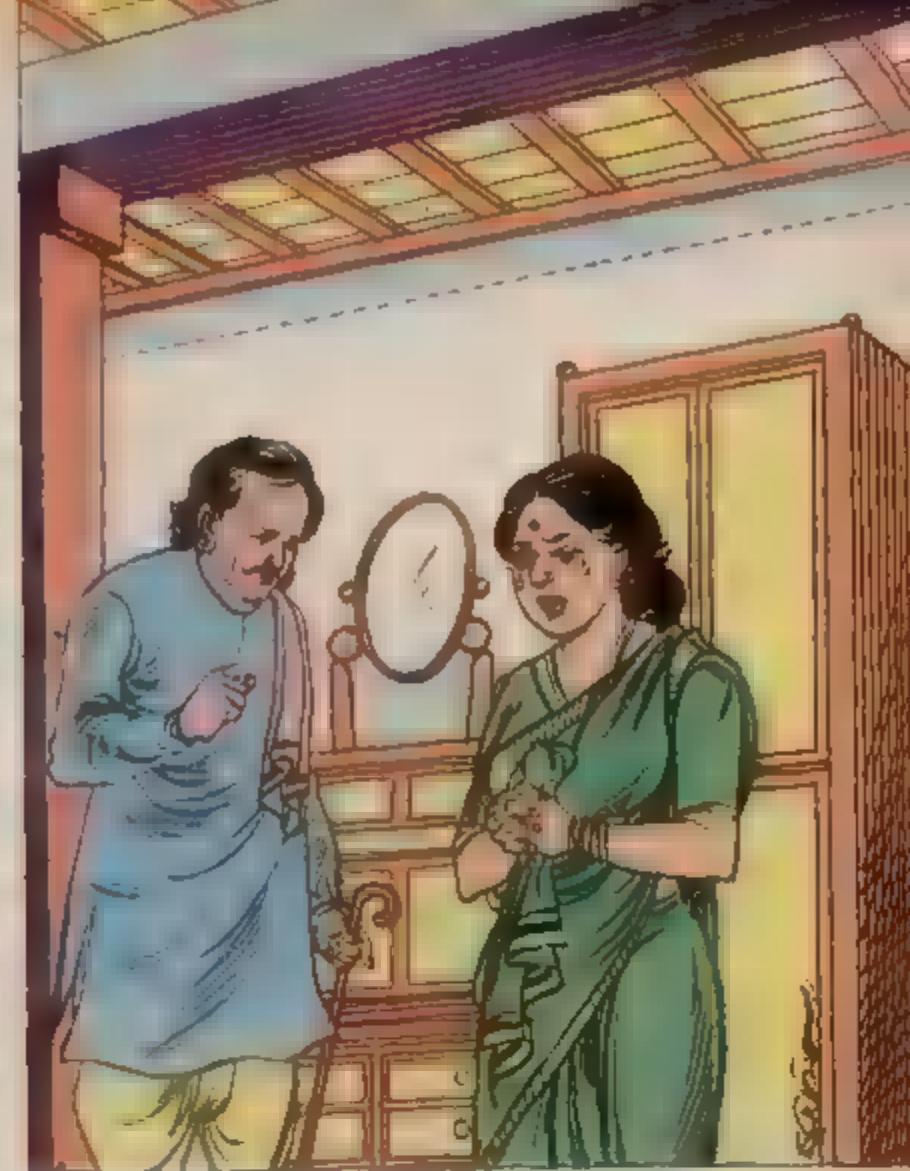
On hearing that his daughter-in-law's father was indisposed, Nanjappa

came to Alkapuri. He spent some time with Parasmull. "I also can't understand what is troubling him, madam," he told Anandi.

"When we came to this place, years ago, my husband used to carry cloth bundles on his back and visit houses and shops selling his ware. Later, he opened a shop. The first few days he didn't make any income. Then he slowly built up his business and saved some money, with which he built this house. Earlier, we were staying in a small rented house. To be very frank, I feel he enjoyed more happiness and peace during those days. Ever since we moved into this house, there would be some problem or other. We were comparatively rich, but what's the use of having money if we can't enjoy any peace?"

Nanjappa went away promising to think up some solution. A week afterwards, their daughter arrived carrying a bag of clothes. Apparently, she had been crying, and her eyes and cheeks were swollen. "Saraswathi! What happened?" asked her mother. "Where's your husband? Have you come alone? Did you both have a quarrel? Why do you want to add to our own misery? Don't stand there weeping! Say something! What happened?"

By then Saraswathi had started crying; her tears came down in torrents. In between her cries, she mumbled, "Amma, we didn't have



any quarrel. But I can't stay there any longer. He has taken to sanyas."

"Did you say 'sanyas'?" her mother asked, unbelievingly. "Why this sudden change?"

"He was thriving in his business," Saraswathi explained. "I don't know what happened, but he seems to have suffered a big loss. That's why he took to sanyas."

Parasmull was listening to this conversation from the next room. He came out. "Saraswathi, don't worry; I shall help and try to set right things," he assured her. "In business, there can be profit as well as loss. It's only natural. But one should not smile only when there is profit and cry only when there is loss. I shall go and bring

him back wherever he is. And I shall see that he takes up business once again." He then called for a set of fresh clothes and immediately set out for Nanjappa's house.

"Whatever has happened, has happened, Nanjappa!" he consoled Nanjappa on arrival. "Don't brood over all that. Your son must have only gone to one of the *ashrams*. Come on, let's go and find him out."

Nanjappa joined him in the vehicle in which Parasmull had come. They went from one ashram to another. Ultimately they found the young man, who was now sporting a beard. The moment he saw his son, Nanjappa was about to say something.

But Parasmull pre-empted him. "Gopal, why this ochre robe and beard? They don't go well with we merchants. Business will have ups and downs. That does not mean, we should take to sanyas when there is a setback. Come on, get back home. We shall start business again. Don't

worry about money. I shall give you whatever you need. Take it as a loan, and you can repay me at your convenience. How much would you want?" Parasmull now turned to Nanjappa to find out whether he approved of his proposal.

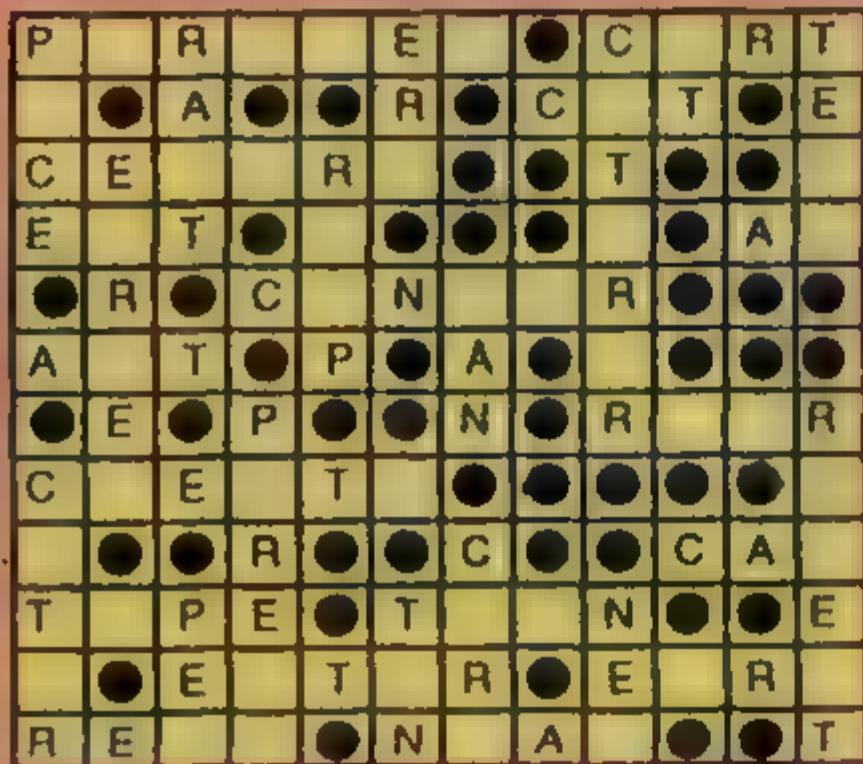
Nanjappa was trying to muffle his laughter. "Parasmull, my friend, who said about loss in business and sanyas and all that? My business has not sustained any loss. Nor has my son taken to sanyas, or discarded his wife. It was all a drama. We wanted to help you come out of your shell. You really gave us all a fright—especially your wife Anandi. We couldn't see the sight of her passing through such agony. Come on, let's all go back to Alkapuri and pacify her. Then we shall take Saraswathi back with us."

Now Parasmull, too, started laughing. "No, I shall not run away from realities. I shall be happy like everybody, and also try to make everybody else happy."



A MERICAN PUZZLE

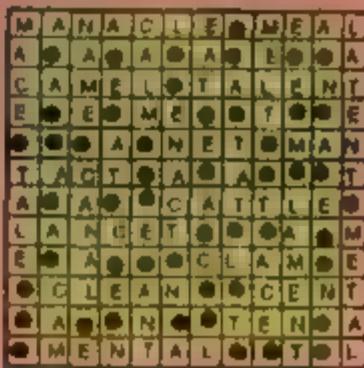
Find 33 words from the single word
'CARPENTER'



Clues

2 letter words - 2
 3 letter words - 9
 4 letter words - 12
 5 letter words - 2
 6 letter words - 6
 7 letter words - 2
 Total words 33

Last month solution



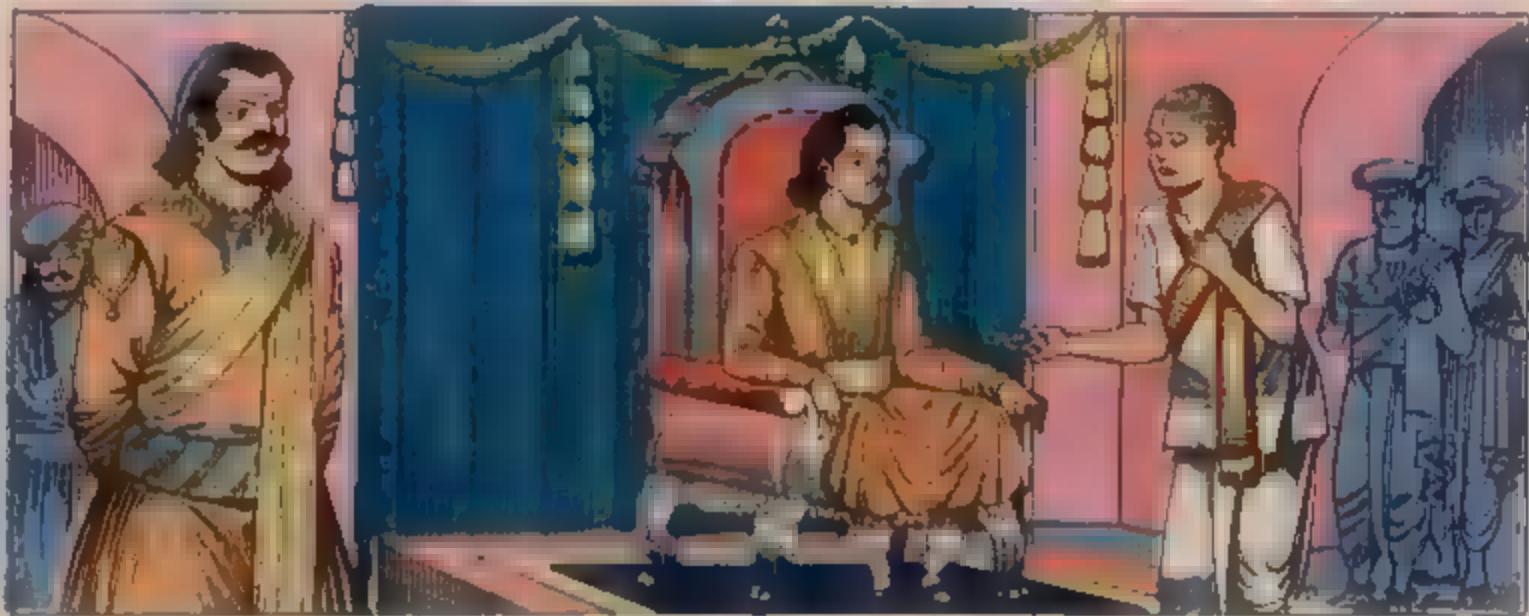
CROSS WORD

WORD



Using the picture clues make connecting words

REMEDY FOR CONCEIT



Kanakaprabha was the zamindar of Kanakadurg. He contemplated declaring his son as his successor. He made elaborate arrangements for a grand ceremony to hand over charge to his son. As part of the celebrations, he wished to honour literateurs, painters, musicians, poets, and intellectuals. Through a public announcement, he invited them to his court to come and receive awards and citations. He made out a list of the recipients in the order of their status and popularity.

Ramchandra Sastri was a *purohit*, who expected to receive a big gift from the zamindar. He rushed to the court. The zamindar's assistants looked into the list and told him that his name was way down, and so he would have to wait till he was called.

He was naturally put out.

The awards ceremony started. One after the other, the names were announced and the awardees went up and received the gift from the zamindar. At last Ramchandra Sastri heard his name and he went up to receive his gift, which was four silver coins. He accepted the gift but told the zamindar, "Respected sir, I've been here for all the four days of the celebrations. If I had kept myself busy looking into the horoscopes of people and telling them about auspicious days, I would have earned more money than these four coins. Please consider me as one who has come all the distance to your court to convey my greetings and good wishes to the junior zamindar." He then turned to the young man. "Please accept this as

my gift!" He handed the coins to him.

This act of Ramchandra Sastri evoked criticism among the people gathered at the function. He was accused of being conceited. He was trying to insult both the zamindar and his son, they said.

Kanakaprabha was listening to all the criticism. He looked at everybody and said: "I should have been naturally the one to be perturbed, but I'm not, because a zamindar is like a river. Many people come to the river to collect water, but the quantity of water they collect depends on the size of the pots they bring."

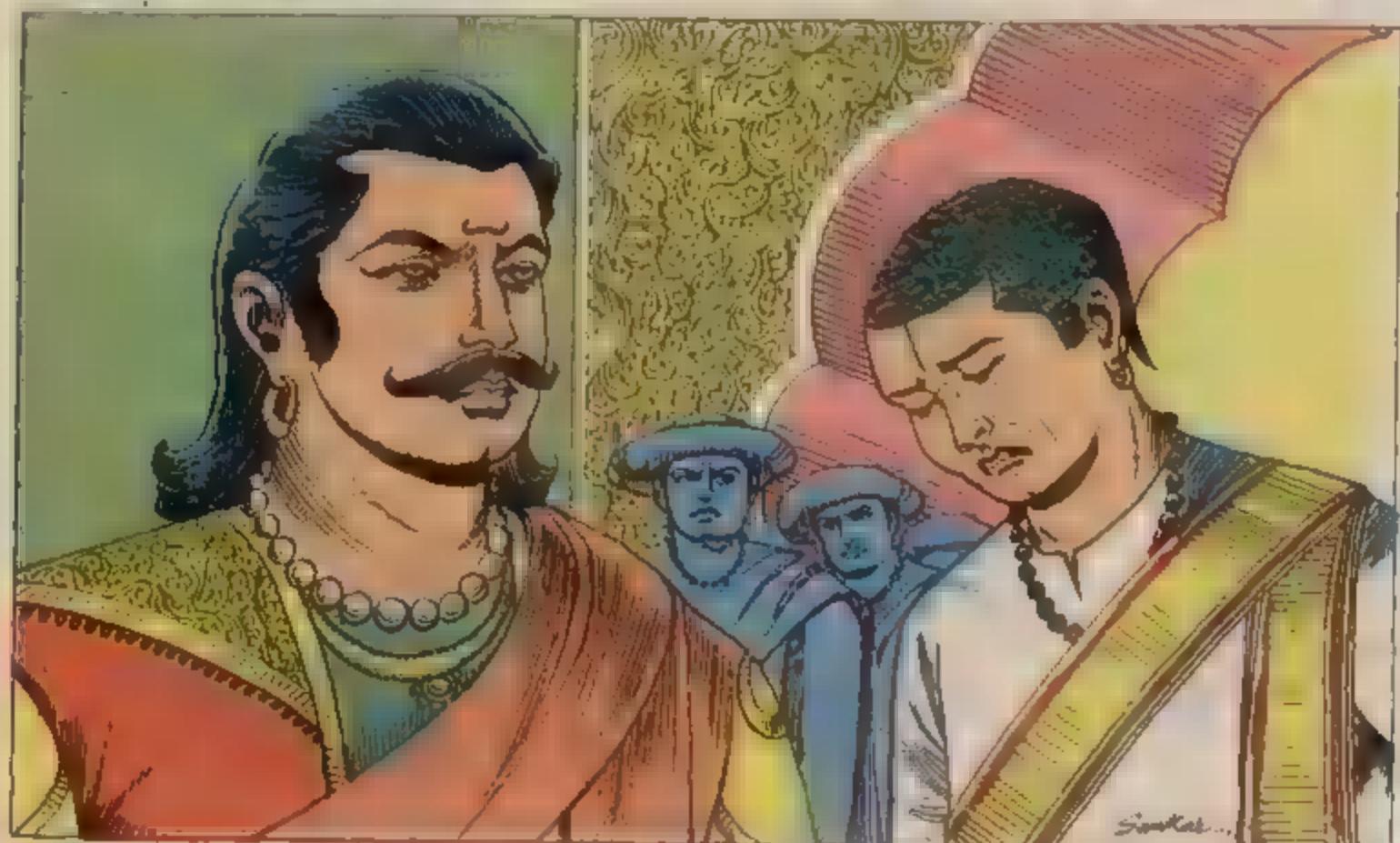
The zamindar's remarks really hit the purohit. Sastri dropped his head, and apologised to the zamindar, who now smiled at him. He understood the disappointment in Sastri as he received only four coins. Magnanimous as

he was, the zamindar gave him some gifts and sent him home happy.

The whole incident became the talk of the town. People now looked at Ramchandra Sastri with greater respect. But this change in people only went to his head, and soon he became really conceited. Unashamedly, he increased his fees for consultation.

Karthaveerya was a poet who enjoyed the patronage of the zamindar. One day, his father passed away. The zamindar took the trouble of attending the funeral. He consoled the poet. Karthaveerya told the zamindar that something else was also bothering him. "What's that, Kartha?" the zamindar queried.

"According to our Sastri, this house is inauspicious even for performing the obsequies of my father," he said



pitifully. "He has asked us to leave the house and not come back for four months. But, by then, even the ninth day ceremony would be over. This house was built by my father, and we have sentimental attachment to the house. Father's soul won't rest in peace if we perform the rites somewhere else."

The zamindar called for Ramchandra Sastri. "Sastri, I've known Kartha's father, and according to my knowledge, he had built this place as per the *shastras* pertaining to architecture. Kartha is very much griefstricken, and I've decided to spend a few days with him here to console him and share his grief. But you seem to have advised him to go away from here for four months. Can't you find a remedy?"

Sastri now scratched his head. It was almost like an order from the zamindar, who appeared adamant about staying with the bereaved family. "There could be a way out,

sir," said Ramchandra Sastri. "But I'll have to study the texts more deeply. Maybe if a *homa* or special *puja* can be held, then Karthaveerya and family will be able to stay back and need not leave the place."

"All right, you go and find out from the books, and tell us what you would advise," said the zamindar.

Sastri returned with some ancient manuscripts and read out certain portions. As per his advice, a *puja* was organised to remove the obstacles to performing the obsequies in that house. Everybody was happy.

The zamindar stayed back for three days, till the ashes were immersed. Before he went away, he called Ramchandra Sastri once again and said: "Sastri, I've decided to consult you in future about auspicious places, time, and dates. You seem to have good knowledge about these things. What do you say?"

Sastri beamed a smile as he nodded his head.





LET US KNOW

What is the difference between Rishi and Muni?

Sanjay Tiwari, Tribeni

The word 'muni' means one who observes silence (*maunam*). When a muni does *tapas*, he observes complete silence and does not speak till he comes out of the *tapas*. Rishi is a sage, who lives in an *ashram* with his wife and children. He does not ordinarily do *tapas*. Sage Viswamitra was a muni, who later became a rishi. Durvasa was a muni as long as he did *tapas*. Narada was always a muni, but was permitted to speak so that he could mediate between the devas. Vyasa was a rishi.

Which country brought out paper currency first? When was paper currency introduced in India?

Vinay Kumar, Bibinagar.

Currency notes were first issued by China. They were introduced in India by the British rulers.

FROM OUR READERS

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I liked this month's (March) "Coastal Journey-in Chennai". I loved it because I like Chennai and the people there. 'Coastal Journey' gives an opportunity to learn the history of India.

M. Guna Ranjan, Guntur

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U. Murali, G. Hari, G. Ammi-Kuppam

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Vilasini M., Bangalore



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MAHANTESH C. MORABAD



MAHANTESH C. MORABAD

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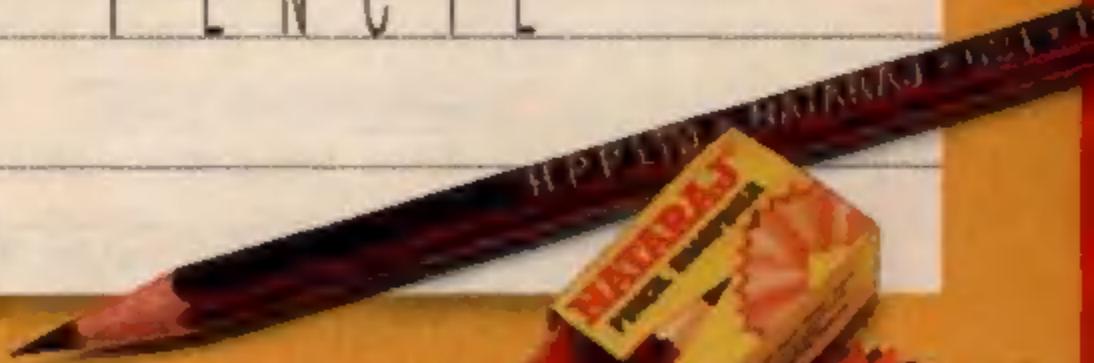
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